

CHARLESTON COUNTY JAIL  
(Charleston District Jail)  
21 Magazine Street  
Charleston  
Charleston County  
South Carolina

HABS NO. SC-688

HABS  
SC  
10-CHAR,  
348-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CHARLESTON COUNTY JAIL  
(Charleston District Jail)

HABS NO. SC-688

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SC  
10-CHAR,  
348-

Location: 21 Magazine Street, southeast corner of Magazine and Franklin streets, Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina.

Present Owner & Occupant: The Housing Authority of the City of Charleston

Present Use: Storage

Significance: Built in 1802, the Charleston District Jail was the result of a state effort to erect a modern structure that incorporated recent reforms in the national criminal code. The Robert Mills addition to the jail included cells for the solitary confinement of prisoners, an innovation advocated by penitentiary system reformers. In the 1850s, the jail was remodeled as part of a local building campaign organized to compete with other cities across the country.

Historian: Christine Trebellas

Project Information: Documentation of the Charleston County Jail was undertaken in the summer of 1994 by the Washington office of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the National Park Service. The principals involved were Robert J. Kapsch, HABS/HAER Division Chief, and Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief of HABS. The Project was jointly sponsored by the Historic Charleston Foundation, Carter Lee Hudgins, Executive Director and Jonathan H. Poston, Director of Preservation Programs, and by the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston, Donald J. Cameron, PHM, Executive Director. The measured drawings were executed under the direction of Project Leader Frederick J. Lindstrom, HABS Supervisory Architect and Sarah Allaback, HABS Staff Historian. The field recording was conducted by Project Supervisor James N. Ferguson, AIA, University of Florida, and Architecture Technicians Christine Hasitzka, Technical University of Vienna, Austria (ICOMOS), Geoffrey A. Haskell, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Mary Ellen Strain, University of Florida, Sean E. Topper, University of Florida, and Historian Christine Trebellas, University of Virginia.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History:

1. Date of construction: The first mention of the lot on the southeast corner of Franklin (formerly Back) and Magazine streets appeared in 1783, when the State Assembly passed an act to incorporate the City of Charleston. According to the act, the City Council of Charleston would manage the area bounded by Queen, Magazine, Franklin (Back) and Logan (formerly Mazyck) streets for public uses. The state, however, had previously set aside a 200' x 200' lot on the corner of Magazine and Franklin for a jail and retained this land for that purpose.<sup>1</sup>

In 1794, the State Assembly appointed several men to serve as commissioners for the jail's construction.<sup>2</sup> John Blake, Edward North, and Timothy Ford placed a notice in the Gazette advertising for artists and workmen to submit proposals for the new building. The several proposals they received the following fall varied from a plan 48' square to a plan 113' x 74', with estimated costs ranging from £8,200 to £15,000.<sup>3</sup> Their letter to the governor dated November 8, 1796, addresses these proposals and reveals much about the process of designing the jail and the thoughts of the commissioners while overseeing its construction. The commissioners wanted a secure, well-designed building with separate accommodations for debtors. Although several proposals were received, the estimated costs were greater than the appropriated funds. The commissioners hoped that northern builders might submit more reasonable offers within their budget. With the rising costs of labor and materials, however, the commissioners decided to delay building the jail for several years until the state could provide a more adequate fund for its construction.<sup>4</sup>

The commissioners also hoped that delays in construction would allow them to incorporate recent reforms in the criminal code. They wanted to fashion the building after a jail in Philadelphia, probably the Walnut Street Jail (1790), a prototype for many other jails in the United States.<sup>5</sup> The Walnut Street Jail had accommodations for debtors and lesser criminals

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<sup>1</sup>David J. McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, vol. 7 (Columbia, SC: A. S. Johnston, 1840), 99.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Cooper, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, vol. 5 (Columbia, SC: A. S. Johnson, 1839), 236.

<sup>3</sup>Commissioners for Building the Gaol in Charleston, 8 November 1796, Governor's Messages, Records of the general Assembly, Microfilm Collection, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.

<sup>4</sup>Commissioners for Building the Gaol in Charleston, 8 November 1796.

<sup>5</sup>Commissioners for Building the Gaol in Charleston, 8 November 1796; David Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1971), 90. Although 1790 is the accepted date for construction of the Walnut Street Jail, Negley K. Teeters argues that the building was erected in 1773. According to Teeters, the later date is based on an act of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, dated 1790, which authorized an additional cell block in the prison yard. See Teeters, The Cradle of the Penitentiary, The Walnut Street Jail at Philadelphia, 1773-1835 (Negley K. Teeters, 1955), 1.

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separate from those for hardened criminals, as well as cells for solitary confinement.<sup>6</sup> A plan of the Charleston District Jail modeled upon this design would incorporate both the wishes of the commissioners and the current reforms in the penal code.

In its report of 1796, the State Assembly agreed with the commissioners in postponing the construction of the jail. The assembly felt that the state would reform the criminal code, which would modify the plan of the jail and possibly incur greater building costs. The assembly also recommended postponing the appropriation of additional funds for the jail and the activities of the building commissioners until the next session, possibly to determine whether the state would actually pass the reforms and require changes in the jail's design.<sup>7</sup>

The Grand Jury of Charleston District also advocated the adoption of the reformed criminal code. In its presentment of September 1797, the jury requested that the State Assembly allocate additional funds to build a jail "adapted to the new system of Criminal Jurisprudence" as soon as possible.<sup>8</sup> Part of the urgency of the Grand Jury was due to the dilapidated state of the building currently used as a district jail. The report suggests that neither the city nor the district owned the current jail. Rather, the building was owned by an organization referred to as the "Corporation," possibly the Corporation of the City of Charleston.

The construction of a district jail for Charleston was a rather lengthy process due to both the actions of the state and local governments and the inadequate funds allotted for the building's construction. Around 1797 the state legislature contemplated building a penitentiary in Columbia instead of a district jail in Charleston, but decided on the Charleston option because of the availability of better, cheaper building materials. The proposed building had to accommodate the changes dictated by the state's revised criminal code. Consequently, the jail was to be 100' x 50', the approximate dimensions of the central cell block, and to contain the necessary cells and rooms required by the reform.<sup>9</sup> The committee also recommended that the legislature invest \$15,000 in stock to raise the \$45,000 necessary for the construction of the jail. It felt that this amount of money would raise sufficient funds, provided the proposed building was erected in Charleston District and not in Columbia.<sup>10</sup>

Even though the state legislature acknowledged the need for a new jail in Charleston, little progress beyond the proposed plan of the new jail occurred in the next several years. In May of 1799, the Grand Jury of Charleston District noted the unfit condition of the current

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<sup>6</sup>Blake McKelvy, American Prisons, A History of Good Intentions (Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith Publishing, 1977), 8.

<sup>7</sup>"Report on the Governor's Message No. 10 Respecting the Gaol of Charleston," 1796, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>8</sup>Grand Jury Presentment, Charleston District, 22 September 1797, Governor's Messages, Records of the General Assembly, Microfilm Collection, SCDH.

<sup>9</sup>"Committee Report on Gaols & Penitentiary House," 2 December 1797, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>10</sup>"Committee Report on Gaols & Penitentiary House."

building and urged the state assembly and the Governor to begin erecting the proposed jail as soon as possible. Although the Grand Jury knew that the funds allocated by the general assembly for the jail's construction were insufficient, it wanted the commissioners to begin with the present money, possibly because it felt that the state legislature would allot further funds to complete a partially finished jail. The jury wanted the Governor to appoint a new commissioner immediately so that construction of the jail could begin without delay, before the rising cost of labor and materials further depleted the sum of money set aside for the new building.<sup>11</sup>

At the next Grand Jury presentment on September 16, 1799, the Grand Jury of Charleston District urged the legislature to set aside additional funds for the new jail, as the current funds were insufficient to adequately complete the project. Although the legislature may have appointed a new commissioner as requested by the former Grand Jury, the building commissioners could not commence the construction of the jail until ample funds were available.

It took three years for the state legislature to officially approve the sale of the stock to raise money for the jail's construction. Although the legislature set aside \$15,000 in 1797 to back this stock, the treasury of Charleston was not authorized to sell the stock until 1800. The legislature gave preference to the state as purchaser of this stock; the treasurer was then to give the money raised by its sale to the commissioners for building the jail. Both the legislature and its advisory committee assumed that the amount of money appropriated in 1799 and the amount of money raised by the sale of stock would be sufficient to build the jail.<sup>12</sup> However, the act of 1799 did not allocate funds for a courthouse or jail in the District of Charleston.<sup>13</sup> The committee recommended that the legislature allow the treasurer of Charleston to sell the jail stock in order to provide for the building's immediate construction.<sup>14</sup>

Although the state and Charleston District began collecting funds for the jail's construction in 1800, the jail was not completed until November of 1802. According to a letter dated November 27, 1802, the commissioners gave the governor a key to the jail and suggested that the building receive prisoners. Due to a lack of funds, however, the outbuildings of the jail were not finished by November. The sale of stock occurred too early to raise a sufficient amount of money for the jail. Increases in the cost of materials and labor, along with the rises in the interest paid on the stock, brought about additional, unforeseen expenses. The

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<sup>11</sup>Grand Jury Presentment, Charleston District, May 1799, Governor's Messages, Records of the General Assembly, Microfilm Collection, SCDAH.

<sup>12</sup>Cooper, ed., Statutes at Large of South Carolina, 386-94.

<sup>13</sup>McCord, ed., Statutes at Large of South Carolina, 293.

<sup>14</sup>"Report on Lieutenant Governor's Message No. 11 Respecting Gaols," 13 December 1800, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDAH)

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commissioners requested an extra \$9,000 to build a 12' wall around the 200' square lot, to dig a well, and to build "a brick building and arched vault for a Necessary" approximately 10' x 20'.<sup>15</sup>

The commissioner's letter also reveals that a plan of the building was presented to the governor and then placed in the South Carolina Secretary of State's office. Although this plan is now missing, the Sheriff of Charleston presented a similar plan to the House of Representatives and the Senate in Columbia for their approval before commencing the construction of the jail. The commissioner's letter informs the governor that "...in the building of the Gaol, we adhered as closely as possible to the plan which the Sheriff of Charleston district has at Columbia...."<sup>16</sup> The identity of the architect, master builder, or draftsman who produced this plan remains unknown.

The Ways and Means Committee basically agreed with the report of the commissioners. In its report, the committee approved the expenditure of \$9,000 to erect the necessary outbuildings and wall around the jail yard. It also recommended the transfer of prisoners to the new jail at this time, even though the grounds were not completely finished.<sup>17</sup> Following this advice, the House and Senate of South Carolina resolved that the Sheriff of Charleston be authorized to remove the prisoners confined in the old jail to the newly built jail on or before January 15, 1803.<sup>18</sup>

Although the 1802 plans of the jail are missing, several letters and reports reveal much about the earlier structure. Thomas Lehre, the Sheriff of Charleston District, wrote the Governor and General Assembly of South Carolina about the living conditions within the Charleston District Jail. In his letter dated November 26, 1803, Lehre notes that the finished jail had been occupied since last January. The prisoners were transferred to the new jail even though the additional improvements to the building, including a wall around the jail yard and various outbuildings, were still incomplete.<sup>19</sup>

In his report, Sheriff Lehre complained about the condition of the jail and the treatment of the prisoners. The windows were without shutters or sashes to keep out the wind and rain. The lack of an outer wall around the jail caused the sheriff to confine several prisoners together in small apartments with no means of exercise, and poor sanitary facilities within the jail's apartments further added to the unsatisfactory living arrangements. Lehre observed that,

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<sup>15</sup>Gov. John Drayton, 27 November 1802, Governor's Messages, Records of the General Assembly, Microfilm Collection, SCDH.

<sup>16</sup>Drayton, 27 November 1802, Governor's Messages.

<sup>17</sup>"The Committee of Ways and Means Report," 13 December 1802, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>18</sup>Resolution, 17 December 1802, Records of the General Assembly, SCDH.

<sup>19</sup>Gov. James B. Richardson, Message with Enclosures, 30 November 1803, Governor's Messages, Records of the General Assembly, Microfilm Collection, SCDH.

Great hardships are endured by Debtors and criminals, especially the latter, by being confined, several together in small apartments in a loathsome prison, particularly in the summer Season for the want of fresh air and exercise - In addition to the above they are compelled to answer the calls of nature, in the very same Rooms, where they eat, drink and sleep which in a climate like ours, creates such a stench as is enough to poison them, indeed in many instances it totally destroys their appetites.<sup>20</sup>

Work on the jail and its grounds continued several years after Sheriff Lehre transferred prisoners to the jail. The May 1805 Grand Jury presentment of Charleston District discusses the state of the jail along with some aspects of its structure. According to the jury's report, several of the windows were still without shutters, and the jail yard continued to lack an outer wall. The weak structure of the windows and walls below resulted in several escapes. The Grand Jury noted that the jail was insecure from the construction of the windows, the lack of an outer wall, and "from the practice which is adopted in the Gaol of cooking in Apartments with wooden floors, since their are good kitchens with paved floors under the building."<sup>21</sup>

The Grand Jury also described the poor living conditions in the jail. Apparently the lack of glazing or shutters on the windows allowed wind and rain to enter these rooms and caused "filth" to accumulate. The swampy area in which the jail was located contributed to its deterioration. According to the Grand Jury, the unhealthy conditions were caused in part by "ponds immediately behind the Gaol filled with stagnant and putrid matter of various kinds which form a source of infection sufficient during the approaching hot months to destroy the healthiness not only of the Gaol but the whole City."<sup>22</sup> Regardless of the unhealthy nature of the area, the Grand Jury still wanted to dig a well in the jail yard.

The state legislature referred the Grand Jury's presentment to a committee for review. The committee approved the allocation of \$9,000 for Charleston District to build a wall around the jail yard and complete the necessary repairs.<sup>23</sup> The 1802 jail reached its final completion on December 18, 1805, when the state assembly resolved to appoint several men to superintend the construction of a brick wall around the jail yard.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Richardson, 30 November 1803, Governor's Messages.

<sup>21</sup>Copy of the First and Fourth Presentments of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, May 1805, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>22</sup>Copy of the First and Fourth Presentments, May 1805.

<sup>23</sup>"Report on the Presentment of the Grand Jury," Charleston District, January and May 1805, Records of the General Assembly, SCDH.

<sup>24</sup>Resolution, 18 December 1805, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

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2. Architect: Not known.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The Charleston District Jail was a public building until 1939, when it was purchased by the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston. On May 6, 1939, the state legislature passed an act authorizing the County Board of Commissioners of Charleston County to sell or convey the jail to the City Council of Charleston.

On January 7, 1939, the County Board of Commissioners gave the City Council of Charleston the Charleston County Jail and "all that tract of land with the buildings thereon situate, lying and being at the Southeast corner of Franklin and Magazine Streets,... Measuring and Containing two Hundred (200) feet in front on Magazine Street by the same on the back line and two hundred (200) feet in depth on Franklin Street and on the East line of said property, be the said dimensions, a little more or less."<sup>25</sup>

Since the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston was conducting a "slum clearance project" in the neighborhood of the jail, the City Council decided to discontinue use of the building "as a place of incarceration of prisoners." In return for the jail, the City Council of Charleston gave the County Board of Commissioners a prison farm located on a piece of land approximately seven miles north of the city. On January 7, 1939, the City Council sold the Charleston County Jail to the Housing Authority for only \$5.00.<sup>26</sup>

4. Original and subsequent uses: The Charleston District Jail operated as a place of incarceration from the time of its completion until its sale to the Housing Authority in 1939. The district jail, originally serving the greater Charleston district, was renamed the Charleston County Jail when its jurisdiction was reduced to Charleston County. During its years of use, the jail imprisoned a variety of men and women, including debtors, witnesses, slaves, and Union soldiers during the Civil War.

In the late 1820s and possibly earlier, masters could keep their slaves in the jail yard for about 20¢ a day before they were sold. According to Basil Hall's description:

In the court yard of the jail, there were 300 slaves, mostly brought from the country for sale, and kept there at 20 cents, or about tenpence a day, penned up like cattle, till the next market day.... Men, women, and children, of all ages, were crowded together in groups, or seated in circles, round fires,

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<sup>25</sup>Deed Book E40, page 480, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance, Charleston, South Carolina.

<sup>26</sup>Deed Book E40, page 483, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance, Charleston, South Carolina.



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cooking their messes of Indian corn or rice. Clothes of all colours were hung up to dry on the wall of the prison.<sup>27</sup>

Slaves were usually not imprisoned or punished in the jail because the neighboring workhouse served these purposes.

During the Civil War, Confederate forces confined Union prisoners in the jail and yard. According to Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Union P.O.W.s were first detained in the jail in the early 1860s, when the building still served as a county jail. The caption accompanying the illustration of the jail as a military prison states:

In last August the jail and yard were occupied by six hundred army and navy officers, who were placed under the fire of our batteries on Morris Island. They were occupied at the same time by felons, murders, lewd women, deserters from both armies, United States colored soldiers, and Southern slaves, most of whom were permitted to walk at will among the officers.<sup>28</sup>

Four years later, Harper's New Monthly Magazine featured another story concerning the fate of the Union prisoners confined in the Charleston Jail and in the surrounding buildings. The conditions at the jail changed very little over the years; many Union prisoners still lived in tents in the yard and were confined with common criminals. The Harper's article describes the situation:

Nearby the work-house is the jail, into the yard of which we could look, from the left wing, and the sight of the three hundred and odd prisoners there assured us that our lot was not the hardest, and afforded a trifle of consolation. They were associated with characters of all descriptions, thieves, assassins, prostitutes - both black and white: many living in tents in the yard, many without any shelter.<sup>29</sup>

Apparently Union prisoners were also temporarily held at the jail until Confederate troops could fashion more appropriate accommodations. Jacob Schirmer notes in his diary entry of September 13, 1861, that "Prisoners about 150 arrived from Richmond this morning under a Guard, they were taken to the Jail, there to remain until Castle Pickney is fitted up to receive them."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Basil Hall, Travels in North America, in the Years 1827 and 1828, 3 volumes (Edinburgh: Ballatyne and Company, 1829; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1974), 162-169.

<sup>28</sup>"Military Prisons in Charleston, South Carolina," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Scrapbook, Historical Society of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina.

<sup>29</sup>"Prison Life," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, July 1865, 144.

<sup>30</sup>Jacob Schirmer Papers, Diary, 13 September 1861, Manuscript Collection, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.

After the sale of the jail to the Housing Authority, the building served a variety of uses, functioning as a maintenance headquarters for the Housing Authority, a storage area, a museum, a police substation, a set for several movies, a costume workshop, and part of a visual exhibit entitled "Places With A Past" at the Spoleto Festival USA.<sup>31</sup>

5. Original plans and construction: Although the original plans of the jail are missing, several early accounts provide some information concerning its layout. According to these descriptions, the three-story brick building measured approximately 100' x 50'. The ground floor included a kitchen with a paved floor. The floors of the upper apartments were made of wood, and the ceiling of the third floor was of thin pine boards or plank. A flight of steps led to the front entrance along Magazine Street, while several other gates provided access to the building.

6. Alterations and additions: The Charleston District Jail has received a number of alterations and several structural additions. One of the first changes was the replacement of the roof in 1817. In 1812 the petition of Sheriff Nathaniel G. Cleary first notified the state legislature that the roof needed repairs. The "open and untight" state of the roof allowed water to enter the jail and saturate the upper apartments. Prisoners could cut through the ceiling below the roof, which consisted of thin pine boards or plank. Sheriff Cleary expressed concern not only for the health of the prisoners, but more so for the insecure condition of the jail building.<sup>32</sup>

Five years later, the Grand Jury of Charleston District also confronted this problem. The roof was in such poor condition that the jury feared it would endanger the lives of the prisoners in the upper apartments. Consequently, the jury recommended immediately repairing the roof and adding a railing to the front steps of the building.<sup>33</sup> The legislature then referred its report to the Committee on Public Buildings, which suggested that the legislature allocate a sum not exceeding \$3,000 for these additions and repairs.<sup>34</sup> In the following months, workmen began repairing and replacing the slate on the roof of the jail.<sup>35</sup> The railings on the flight of steps

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<sup>31</sup>Robert Behre, "Old Charleston Jail Gets Attention," Evening Post-Courier (Charleston, SC), 27 December 1993. "May Be Renovated," The News and Courier (Charleston, SC), 25 May 1990.

<sup>32</sup>Petition of Nathaniel Greene Cleary, No Date, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDAH. See also Report on the Petition of N. G. Cleary, 11 December 1812, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDAH.

<sup>33</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, 23 January 1817, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDAH.

<sup>34</sup>"Report of the Committee on Public Buildings," 26 March 1817, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDAH.

<sup>35</sup>Emmett Robinson Papers, Research Notes, Manuscript Collection, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.

leading to the front door of the building, however, were not completed until December of 1819.<sup>36</sup>

By 1821 the Charleston District Jail had become too small for the needs of the district, and an addition was planned exclusively for the confinement of criminals. Many expressed concern about the insecure state of the jail and felt that an addition designed to segregate criminals would better protect citizens as well as imprisoned debtors.<sup>37</sup>

The large number of "great gates of entrance" to the building was another security concern. Consequently, alterations to the entrances of the building were planned.<sup>38</sup> However, the joint committee consisting of the Charleston delegation and members of the general assembly, considered an addition "for the enlargement of said jail and for the exclusive reception of Criminals...entirely unnecessary."<sup>39</sup>

Despite the committee's advice, the desire and need to build an addition to the jail did not subside. An act to erect the jail extension apparently passed, for the following year an advertisement appeared in The Charleston Courier requesting proposals for work on the jail. The advertisement states that information concerning the plans and specifications for the jail addition could be received from a Mr. Mills of 169 East-Bay, who would later give these plans to the commissioners of the building project.<sup>40</sup>

Robert Mills, presumably the Mr. Mills of East-Bay, served as Commissioner of the Board of Public Works for South Carolina from December 20, 1820, to December 31, 1822, and as Superintendent of Public Buildings from January 1, 1823, to December 31, 1823. During this time, he designed and oversaw the construction of several public buildings in South Carolina, including approximately fourteen courthouses and thirteen jails.<sup>41</sup> According to the advertisement in The Charleston Courier and Kohn's Internal Improvement in South Carolina, Mills designed the addition to the Charleston District Jail. The state paid Mills \$1,000 for his work on

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<sup>36</sup>"Report and Statement of the Commissioners for Repairing the Charleston Jail," 6 December 1819, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>37</sup>David Kohn, ed., Internal Improvement in South Carolina 1817-1828 (Washington, D.C.: By the author, 1938), 110.

<sup>38</sup>Kohn, ed., Internal Improvement, 110.

<sup>39</sup>"Report of the Joint Committee on the Report of the Board of Public Works as Relates to the Jail of Charleston District," 5 December 1821, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>40</sup>The Charleston Courier, 20 March 1822.

<sup>41</sup>John M. Bryan, "Public Architecture in South Carolina: 1820-30," Robert Mills, Architect (Washington, D.C.: The American Institute of Architects, 1989), 76.

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the jail, in addition to the money paid J. O'Neal for his carpentry work and I. Gordon for his brick work.<sup>42</sup>

Kohn's Internal Improvement of South Carolina contains a brief description of the addition and its construction. Instead of emptying the jail and rebuilding the interior, which would require the erection of temporary facilities to house the prisoners, a new wing was built. This fireproof addition was to contain several cells for the confinement of prisoners. The Board of Public Works reasoned that if a fire broke out in the main building, the jailer would not have to remove prisoners confined in the fireproof cells of the annex.<sup>43</sup>

The report of the commissioners of the jail includes a short inspection of the new addition. The addition blocked several windows on the second floor of the main building, which were then bricked in. "The windows on the second floor have been boarded up more than two thirds of the opening to prevent communication from without, this excluding both air and light the commissioners think that the comfort of the prisoners requires that undergratings of iron should be constructed."<sup>44</sup> They also thought that the third-floor ceiling of the main building should be strengthened so that it would no longer provide a means of escape. Their report recommended adding four new iron doors to the cells of the new wing for security purposes.

Although no original plans of the Robert Mills addition have been found, several written accounts describe the layout of the building. Between 1825 and 1826, Karl Bernhard traveled through the United States observing life in American cities. Bernhard's journal describes several public buildings in Charleston, including the jail, workhouse, poor house, and insane asylum. His account of the jail implies that the main building was at least three stories high, consisting of an upper story, a first floor, and a ground floor. The walls and floors of the structure were made of oak. According to Bernhard's description, the ground floor housed the jailer's quarters and chambers for the gentlemen prisoners, those men who could either afford to bribe the jailer for better accommodations or receive better lodgings based on their social rank. The other debtors and lesser criminals were held on the first floor and allowed to use the jail yard, while the more hardened prisoners were confined to the upper floor. Bernhard also observes that each apartment contained an iron ring in the floor for securing the dangerous prisoners.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Kohn, ed., Internal Improvement, 158.

<sup>43</sup>Kohn, ed., Internal Improvement, 151.

<sup>44</sup>"Report of the Commissioners on Citadel, Magazine and Gaol for Charleston District," No Date, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDAH.

<sup>45</sup>Karl Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, Travels Through North America, During the Years 1825 and 1826, 2 volumes (Philadelphia: Cary, Lea & Carey, 1828), vol 2, 7-10. See also Thomas D. Clark, ed., South Carolina, The Grand Tour 1780-1865 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973).

In his Statistics of South Carolina, Robert Mills discusses the Charleston Jail and his addition:

The public prison is situated on Magazine-street, corner of Back-street. It is a large three story brick building, with very roomy and comfortable accommodations for those whose unfortunate lot it is to be there confined. There has been lately added to it a four story wing building, devoted exclusively to the confinement of criminals. It is divided into solitary cells, one for each criminal, and the whole made fire-proof. A spacious court is attached to the prison, and every attention to cleanliness is paid throughout, which is highly creditable to those who have charge of the institution. Very general good health is enjoyed by the prisoners.<sup>46</sup>

Although Mills' description supports Bernhard's portrayal of the main building, his account of the prisoners' quarters differs slightly. Bernhard suggests that there were not accommodations for the solitary confinement of prisoners; the hardened criminals shared cells and were chained to the floor.<sup>47</sup> According to Basil Hall's account of the jail, some cells were for solitary confinement. However, if there were a large number of prisoners, the jailer housed more than one criminal in these cells. Hall further notes that the jail yard was used to hold slaves until they were auctioned. Like Karl Bernhard and several other travelers, Hall comments on the fact that the prisoners in the jail had no form of active labor. In his journal he states:

In the jail there were no separate sleeping berths for the prisoners, who appeared to pass their days and nights in idleness and free communication. At one part of the prison I saw several small cells for different descriptions of convicts, who, however, had no labour to perform.<sup>48</sup>

Francis C. Adams wrote about his 1852 visit to the Charleston Jail in his book, Manuel Pereira; or, The Sovereign Rule of South Carolina. Adams describes the high brick wall surrounding the building and the double rows of iron bars covering the windows. A door with iron bars guarded the entry. The ground floor of the jail contained a narrow passage flanked by the jailer's quarters on the right and by four small cells for debtors and the kitchen on the left. Another iron door led to the stairs on the second floor. According to Adam's account, this floor included eight or nine

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<sup>46</sup>Robert Mills, Statistics of South Carolina (Charleston, S.C.: Huribut and Lloyd, 1826; reprint Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1972), 240. Mills' description of the jail does not correspond with the present octagonal wing, which many previous scholars have incorrectly attributed to Robert Mills.

<sup>47</sup>Bernhard may not have visited the new addition with solitary cells. It is also possible that the cells he saw were meant to hold only one prisoner, but that overcrowding required confining two to a cell.

<sup>48</sup>Hall, Travels in North America, 162-169.

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cells of varying sizes for a variety of prisoners. The jailer allowed prisoners on the second floor the limited use of the jail yard. Adam notes that:

This floor [second floor] is appropriated for such crimes as assault and battery with intent to kill; refractory seamen; deserters; violating the statutes; suspicion of arson or murder; witnesses; all sorts of crimes, varying from the debtor to the positive murder, burglar, and felon.<sup>49</sup>

Adams also describes the third floor, commonly called "Mount Rascal" by the prisoners. An iron door and winding passage led from the second floor to the third floor, where another iron door opened into the vestibule. On either side of the hall were large grated doors with heavy iron bolts and bars that opened into "dark, gloomy cells." Like Karl Bernhard, Adams also notes that these cells contained a large iron "ring-bolt" in the center to chain "refractory" prisoners.<sup>50</sup> Adams discovered that small stone cells in the jail yard confined Blacks, troublesome prisoners, and men sentenced to capital punishment. "These cells seemed to be held as terror over the criminals, and well they might; for we never witnessed anything more dismal for the tenement of man."<sup>51</sup>

In addition to these written accounts, several maps of Charleston contain rough sketches of the jail that include the Robert Mills addition. The Allen and Bridgen "Survey Book" of 1851 shows the jail on a 200' wide lot at the southeast corner of Magazine and Logan streets.<sup>52</sup> The jail building is L-shaped, with the main block set approximately 31' from Magazine Street and a front entry approximately 36' wide. A wing extends from the east rear of the building. According to the surveyor's notes, the dimensions of the main building are approximately 98' x 50', while the Mills addition is roughly 18' x 51'. The Hayden Brother & Co. map of 1852 and the J. H. Colton map of 1855 confirm the L-shaped configuration of the jail's main building and addition. Both maps show the main building with a large wing extending from the south side.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Francis C. Adams, Manuel Pereira; or, The Sovereign Rule of South Carolina (London: Clark, Beeton & Co., 1852), 142-51, 165-67.

<sup>50</sup>Adams, Manuel Pereira, 142-51, 165-67.

<sup>51</sup>Adams, Manuel Pereira, 142-51, 165-67.

<sup>52</sup>Robert C. Allen and Richard P. Bridgen, "Survey Book," 1851, Manuscript Collection, SCHS.

<sup>53</sup>"An Original Map of the City of Charleston" (New York, N.Y.: Hayden Brother & Co., 1852), SCHS. "The City of Charleston" (New York, N.Y.: J. H. Colton, 1855), SCHS. These maps also depict a small projection protruding from the rear of the building opposite the addition. This extension may be the piazza built in 1826 that Emmett Robinson refers to in his research notes. Emmett Robinson Papers, Manuscript Collection, SCHS.

In 1824 Sheriff Cleary oversaw a series of improvements to the Charleston District Jail. During this time, several workmen repaired the plaster and painted the interior of the building. A garden enclosure was added to the jail yard.<sup>54</sup>

According to Emmett Robinson's research notes archived at the South Carolina Historical Society, a piazza approximately 9' wide was added to the rear of the jail in 1826. This piazza was erected on the south facade of the jail between the Robert Mills wing and the "jetty" left for a wing on the opposite side of the building.<sup>55</sup> Although no plans for this addition have been located, several maps of the City of Charleston provide a rough outline of a piazza. An 1852 map of the city depicts two rectangular structures extending from the rear of the building. The Robert Mills addition protrudes from the east side, while the other structure, presumably the piazza, projects from the west.<sup>56</sup> Another map of Charleston, printed in 1855, shows a small rectangular wing extending from the rear of the jail and balancing the Robert Mills annex on the other side.<sup>57</sup>

Between 1820 and 1826 several members of the Grand Jury suggested installing a cistern for the jail. The Grand Jury of Charleston first made this recommendation in its presentment of October 6, 1820. Some years passed, however, before the building commissioners agreed that a cistern would benefit the institution. They thought that "the Want of Good Water has been seriously felt in the Gaol And it could easily be supplied from the roof if there was a cistern."<sup>58</sup> In 1825, the Grand Jury of Charleston again requested that a cistern be erected on the jail grounds. It proposed building the cistern on the ground story of the east wing of the jail because the other stories were "totally unfit for confining prisoners in such a climate as ours."<sup>59</sup> Unfortunately, the presentment seems to have had little effect; a year later, the Grand Jury again advised constructing a cistern for the jail.<sup>60</sup> Although there are no records or building accounts, the two cisterns in the attic of the jail may have been the result of this continuous concern regarding the unfit state of the well water.

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<sup>54</sup>Presentments of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, May 1824, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH. Petitions, No Date, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>55</sup>Emmett Robinson Papers, Manuscript Collection, SCHS.

<sup>56</sup>"An Original Map of the City of Charleston," Hayden Brothers & Co., 1852.

<sup>57</sup>"The City of Charleston," New York: J. H. Colton, 1855.

<sup>58</sup>Report of the Commissioners on Citadel, Magazine, and Gaol for Charleston District.

<sup>59</sup>Presentments of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, Fall 1825, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>60</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, October 1826, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

By 1851 the original jail and the Robert Mills addition were in need of repair. The Grand Jury of Charleston complained that the jail was badly ventilated, poorly arranged, and insecure. Although it may have overstated these problems to receive additional funds, the Grand Jury felt that these conditions were caused by "radical errors in the original plan and construction of the building." It wanted to build a new jail incorporating "enlightened experience and modern improvement" instead of retrofitting the old building and addition.<sup>61</sup>

The Commissioners of Public Buildings examined their report and considered either building a new jail or altering the present structure "as to render it more secure as well as more convenient."<sup>62</sup> However, the Committee on Public Buildings was not ready to make such a decision based on the information given and requested to be "discharged from the further consideration of the subject."<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, the debate concerning the construction of a new jail continued. On December 20, 1853, the state legislature passed an act to appropriate \$30,000 for building a new jail in Charleston.<sup>64</sup> This sum must not have been enough to erect the new jail envisioned by the District of Charleston, for the 1854 Grand Jury presentment asked for a further appropriation to erect this structure. The Grand Jury felt that repairing the old building would be a waste of money when, with an additional sum, it could erect a new jail that would more than sufficiently fulfill the needs of the city and district.<sup>65</sup> Like the committee before it, this committee on Public Buildings refused to recommend the additional allocation and asked to be discharged from further debate on the subject.<sup>66</sup>

Despite the Grand Jury's reluctance to proceed, the state legislature approved the recommendation and passed an act in 1854 to allot an additional \$10,000 for work on the Charleston District Jail. It placed the total jail fund, \$40,000, in the hands of the commissioners of Public Buildings for Charleston District. According to the Grand Jury of Charleston District, the commissioners then adopted a plan for the new building and prepared to advertise for contracts for the erection of the structure. They intended for the new jail to be built on the site of the old jail and to re-use the

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<sup>61</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, May 1851, Published 21 November 1851, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>62</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, Fall 1852, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>63</sup>Report of the Committee on Public Buildings, 30 November 1852, Records of the General Assembly, SCDH.

<sup>64</sup>Statutes at Large of South Carolina, vol. 12, 198-203.

<sup>65</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, October 1854, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>66</sup>Report of the Committee on Public Buildings at the Presentment of the Grand Jury of Charleston District, No Date, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.



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materials in the construction of the new building.<sup>67</sup> The Grand Jury suggested setting aside a small sum to build a temporary structure for the prisoners until the new jail was completed and to cover any additional construction expenses.<sup>68</sup>

It is unclear exactly when the legislature decided to remodel the jail rather than erect a new building. However, shortly after this presentment, on December 10, 1855, an advertisement appeared in The Charleston Daily Courier requesting proposals for work on the jail. The Commissioners of Public Buildings sought builders to provide the materials and undertake work on the jail. These builders were also to name two people who would legally back their proposals. The advertisement noted that builders could view the plans and specifications for the building at the office of the architects Barbot and Seyle.<sup>69</sup> Louis J. Barbot and John H. Seyle are credited with remodeling the Charleston Jail in the popular Medieval style. Barbot and Seyle were partners between 1852 and 1856. Although it is unclear if Seyle worked with anyone before this partnership, Louis J. Barbot was previously employed with Edward C. Jones of the firm Jones and Lee, which had remodeled the Charleston workhouse and designed Gothic Revival county jails for Walterboro (1855-1856) and Orangeburg (1857-60).<sup>70</sup>

Although the advertisement stated that the commissioners would receive building proposals until December 10, 1856, work on the jail began even earlier. Despite a scaffolding accident involving three men laboring at the jail in October of 1856, by April of 1857, the builders had almost completed the new addition. According to the Grand Jury's presentment, the prisoners remained in the 1802 section of the jail, which was partially built on the location of the old Robert Mill's addition, during Barbot and Seyle's renovations. The jury's report also implies that the new plan and style of the jail followed current fashion and would "present a building both useful and ornamental."<sup>71</sup>

In June of 1859 the Charleston Grand Jury visited the newly completed building. Unlike earlier grand juries that promoted the building, this jury criticized the plan and interior arrangements of the new addition and thought the design of the new building inappropriate for the Charleston climate. It concluded that the best solution was to raze the whole structure and build a new one in its place.<sup>72</sup> Nor did the Grand Jury

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<sup>67</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, October 1855, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>68</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, October 1855.

<sup>69</sup>The Charleston Daily Courier, 10 December 1855.

<sup>70</sup>Mills Lane, Architecture of the Old South: South Carolina (Savannah, GA: The Beehive Press, 1884), 234. Robert P. Stockton, "Streets and Structures," Information for Historic Guides of Charleston (Charleston, SC: City of Charleston, Department of Tourism, 1985), 330.

<sup>71</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, April 1857, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>72</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, June 1859, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

for October 1859 favor the new additions. Like the previous jury, it recommended alterations and the addition of a stove or some other mode of heating.<sup>73</sup> Although little seems to have been done about the "unfavorable arrangement" of the new structure, by January of 1860 a stove had been added to the building.<sup>74</sup>

No plans of the Barbot and Seyle renovations to the Charleston Jail have been found, but several maps and illustrations provide some information concerning the building's remodeling. The August 8, 1857, edition of Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion contains an illustration of the jail and several buildings in the area, including the workhouse and the Marine Hospital. The illustration of the jail, made shortly after the renovations, shows a tripartite structure consisting of a front portion, a main block, and a rear extension. The front portion, presumably part of the Barbot and Seyle additions, includes a four-story entry bay flanked on either side by five-story towers. Visible decorative elements, many of which are present today, include two belt courses, an ornamental molding over the windows, and a battlement running along the top of the structure. The main block of the building consists of what appears to be the 1802 jail with an added fourth floor and a high hipped roof. The rear portion of the jail, also designed by Barbot and Seyle, replaced the Robert Mills addition. Although the front sections of the jail hide much of this addition, the structure appears to be roughly four stories high and topped by a two-story octagonal tower.<sup>75</sup>

The February 1861 edition of Harper's New Monthly Magazine also contains an illustration of the jail. It depicts the rear of the building, a four-story octagonal structure topped by a battlement and a two-story octagonal tower, and the makeshift quarters that confined Union prisoners during the Civil War.<sup>76</sup>

Four years later, Harper's ran another article concerning the military prisoners stationed at the jail. The illustrations accompanying the article present several buildings in the area bounded by Magazine, Queen, Logan, and Franklin streets, including the jail, workhouse, and Roper Hospital. Like the previous portrayal of the jail, this illustration depicts the rear of the building and the jail yard. The two-story octagonal tower topping the four-story octagon, however, appears slightly taller in this illustration. The rendering of the battlements is also slightly different.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, October 1859, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>74</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, January 1860, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDH.

<sup>75</sup>"Jail and Marine Hospital, Charleston, S.C.," wood engraving, Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion (8 August 1857), 88.

<sup>76</sup>"Jail. Military Prisons at Charleston, South Carolina," illustration in Harper's New Monthly Magazine, February 1861, 108.

<sup>77</sup>"Jail-Yard, Charleston," illustration in "Prison-Life," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, July 1865, 144.

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A photograph of the Charleston Jail taken in April of 1868 also shows a four-story building with two five-story towers flanking the entry on Magazine Street. The front section appears to connect to the main block in an angular fashion, mimicking the attachment of the main block and the octagon. Three belt courses running along the front and middle sections of the jail mark the visual division between the first, second, third, and fourth floors. These belt courses do not appear to continue to the octagonal wing; nor does a decorative molding appear over the windows in this section. The two-story octagonal tower that tops the jail has both a belt course and an ornamental battlement running along its roof line. A brick wall approximately 15' high surrounds the building and yard. Two pilastered openings in the wall once flanked either side of the jail's main entry on Magazine Street. The photograph reveals that one of these portals was bricked in before 1868.<sup>78</sup>

On August 31, 1886, a severe earthquake damaged many of the buildings in Charleston, including the jail, workhouse, and Roper Hospital. According to Robert Stockton, the area containing these buildings received more damage than any other block in the city.<sup>79</sup> Photographs and maps of the jail taken before and after the earthquake give a rough estimate of the damage to the area and the changes resulting from it. The 1882 City Engineer's maps reveal that the block bounded by Magazine, Queen, Mazyck (Logan), and Franklin streets contained the Charleston County Jail, the Medical College, Roper Hospital, and the "Colored Hospital," which was the former workhouse. A photograph taken in 1883 from St. Michael's steeple shows the two main towers and smaller corner towers of Roper Hospital, with the octagonal tower and roof line of the jail in the background. After the earthquake, this octagonal tower was so badly damaged that it had to be removed. A photograph in Major Courtenay's scrapbook at the Charleston Library Society illustrates the extent of this damage. The photograph shows the octagonal tower with a large section of the second story missing and a long fissure running from the bottom of the tower to the lower edge of the missing area. The roof of the octagonal wing of the jail appears to have caved in.<sup>80</sup>

Written accounts of the earthquake damage also discuss dramatic changes in the area bounded by Magazine, Queen, Logan, and Franklin streets. According to a News and Courier article of September 4, 1886, printed only four days after the earthquake,

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<sup>78</sup>Photograph of the Charleston Jail, 21 Magazine St., April 1868. Original by Quinby & Co., Photographic Artists, Charleston, S.C., Photograph Collection, SCHS.

<sup>79</sup>Robert P. Stockton, The Great Shock, The Effects of the 1886 Earthquake on the Built Environment of Charleston, South Carolina (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1986), 44.

<sup>80</sup>Charleston County Jail Photograph, Emmett Robinson Papers, Manuscript Collection, SCHS, original in the William Ashmead Courtenay Scrapbook, The Cyclone, 1885, and Earthquake, 1886, Special Collections, Charleston Library Society, Charleston, South Carolina, page 61.

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No where, perhaps, in the city has the destroying hand of nature been laid with more appalling effect than the square bounded by Queen, Mazyck, Magazine, and Franklin streets, containing the Hospital buildings, the County Jail and the South Carolina Medical College. These buildings are all massive brick structures, but their great bulk and weight, instead of saving them, seems only to have increased the power of the quivering earth for their destruction.<sup>81</sup>

The article states that all of the buildings within this area were badly damaged, especially Roper Hospital, which was condemned and razed. The Coloured Hospital, formerly known as the Sugar-house or the workhouse, also suffered severe damage and had to be demolished.

Although the Charleston County Jail suffered from the earthquake, it was slightly more fortunate than the other buildings in the area. The jail sustained serious damage to the jailer's apartments facing Magazine Street and the octagonal tower on top of the octagonal wing. This tower, also referred to as the "ventilator" or the "high cupola," had to be condemned and torn down.<sup>82</sup> The badly-cracked walls of the main building and octagon were rebuilt. According to the News and Courier:

The massive brick walls, in some places nearly three feet thick, yielded to the quivering earth like so much glass and the walls are filled with gaping cracks, many of which extend from the top of the building to the very foundations underground.<sup>83</sup>

The article also described events at the jail the night of the earthquake. Apparently the jailer released the prisoners into the jail yard to avoid their being injured by the trembling building. The earthquake, however, created an opening in the jail wall, through which thirty-six of the sixty-nine prisoners escaped.<sup>84</sup> Several other accounts of the earthquake also discuss the condition of the jail. According to Edward Dutton, the buildings on the block all sustained "unusual injury" since these large brick structures were erected on "made" ground.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>"The City Hospital," The News and Courier, September 4, 1886.

<sup>82</sup>"The County Jail," News and Courier, September 4, 1886.

<sup>83</sup>"The County Jail," n.p.

<sup>84</sup>"The County Jail," n.p.

<sup>85</sup>Capt. Clarence Edward Dutton, The Charleston Earthquake of August 31, 1886 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1890, reprinted 1979), 250.

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The official damage reports of the earthquake confirm these building descriptions. The reports state the owner, basic building material, dimensions, and condition of the walls and chimneys, as well as a rough estimate of damage to buildings in Charleston. According to the entry concerning the jail, the brick building was roughly 150' x 100' and 40' high, with a tin roof. The poor condition of all the walls led the engineers to believe that approximately \$10,000 worth of damage had been done to the structure and to recommend its entire restoration. Indeed, the damage was so severe that the County of Charleston vacated the building until repairs could be made.<sup>86</sup>

A Sanborn map made just two years after the earthquake shows the Charleston County Jail on a lot containing a water closet and surrounded by a 20' wall. The jail appears to be four stories high and still needs to be rebuilt.<sup>87</sup> This remodeling included removing the octagonal tower, eliminating the fourth floor of the jail and altering the front section. A photograph of the jail taken in the 1890s shows a three-story structure with two four-story towers surrounded by a roughly 15' wall. The connection between the jailer's quarters and the main block was altered to make it more square.<sup>88</sup> The 1902 floor plans of the jail and the 1937 Sanborn map of the area show a three-story structure with two four-story towers. The Sanborn map reveals that the 20' high wall has been reduced to 12' on the front and sides, while the water closet has been completely removed.<sup>89</sup>

After the Housing Authority obtained the jail in 1939, the wall surrounding the jail and yard was reduced in height.<sup>90</sup> In 1975, the Housing Authority leased the jail to Bartley J. Riddock and A. A. Burris, Jr., who planned to open the building to visitors as a museum. Small changes made to the jail at this time included the addition of bars near the rear entrance, which the Department of Corrections loaned from the State Penitentiary in Columbia. Portions of the jail's structure were reconstructed under the direction of Emmett Robinson, who may have also designed the additional cells on the first floor and in the octagonal wing.<sup>91</sup> Several years later, C. Harrington Bissell took over operation of the jail museum. Bissell moved his exhibits

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<sup>86</sup>Records of Earthquake Damage, 1886, Microfilm Collection, Historic Charleston Foundation, original at SCHS, page 48.

<sup>87</sup>Sanborn Map for Charleston, SC, (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, June 1888), sheet 40.

<sup>88</sup>James Moore Rhett, III, and John Carson Hay Steele, "The Jail," Charleston Then and Now, (Columbia, SC: The R. L. Bryan Company, 1974), 52.

<sup>89</sup>Sanborn maps for Charleston, SC, (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Inc., January 1937).

<sup>90</sup>Rear wall illustration of the Jail, March 21, 1939, News and Courier, Charleston, SC, 12: 2-4. "Wall on Franklin will be Reduced," News and Courier, April 21, 1939, 12:2-4. "Razing of Jail Annex to Jail is Begun," News and Courier, January 21, 1939, 12:1. The bricks from the walls of the jail were needed to construct three dwelling buildings for the Housing Authority in the old Medical College area.

<sup>91</sup>Karen Greene, "Old Haunts Revived at City Jail," Courier Evening Post (Charleston, SC), 30 January 1975. "Old Charleston Jail, Museum to Open," Evening Post-Courier (Charleston, SC), 27 December 1975. Emmett Robinson Papers, Manuscript Collection, SCHS.

from the closed Provost Dungeon Museum at the Exchange Building. Under his leadership, a door was cut through the second floor wall of the main cell block to allow access to the jailer's quarters.<sup>92</sup>

B. Historical Context:

Burial Ground:

The block upon which the jail was built has been used for public purposes since the late seventeenth century. The first known accounts of the area indicate that the swampy land was used as a burial ground. A plat of Charleston from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century by Stephen Bull shows the lots, market places, streets, wharfs, and burying places of the city. The swampy area to the northwest of the town above "Capt. Hawkett's square of ten lots" and by "Hobson's 4 lots" contains "the old Church yard," which implies that the town used the area as a burial ground several years before Stephen Bull drew the plat.<sup>93</sup>

The act incorporating the City of Charleston and establishing a public square also suggests that the city previously used this land as a cemetery for Blacks. According to the 1783 act, the City Council of Charleston would manage "the lands bounded by Queen Street, Magazine street, Back Street, and Mazyck Street, (except two hundred feet square at the north-west corner thereof, reserved for a gaol;) such part of the negro burial ground as is public property."<sup>94</sup>

Charles Fraser, in his book Reminiscences of Charleston, also mentions that a Black burial ground formerly stood on this public square. While discussing the growth of Charleston, Fraser notes that several green spaces once lay on the outskirts of the town. He lists a few of these old areas, which the city had since developed, including the public space containing a Black cemetery.

There was a word then, and some years afterwards, known in our topography, now no longer used, to wit: a green - to denote large, vacant spaces along the margin of the town. The *College green* we have already mentioned. There was *Bouquet's green*[,] ...*Harleston's green*, extending north of it to a considerably distance; then a large space immediately west of the Poor-house square, used as a negro burial ground, where the old magazine stood, to which the present Magazine-street led directly.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Dora Ann Reeves, "Atmosphere Important to Old Jail Mussum," Courier Evening Post, 20 March 1978.

<sup>93</sup>Plat 27, circa 1685, McCrady Plat Collection, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance, Charleston, South Carolina.

<sup>94</sup>McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, 7:99.

<sup>95</sup>Charles Fraser, My Reminiscences of Charleston (1854; reprint, Charleston, SC: Garnier & Company, 1969), 25.

#### Powder Magazines:

A plat from 1742 also reveals that the area northwest of Hawckett's square was formerly used as a "Burying Ground." A large portion of the land in this area belonged to Isaac Mazyck. After his death, the lands were partitioned among his heirs, divided into lots, and offered for sale. According to this 1742 plat, Paul Mazyck received the land containing the "Burying Ground" during this division. The City of Charleston, however, built a workhouse [poorhouse] and circular powder magazine on top of this ground.<sup>96</sup> A petition by Ralph Izard, Nathaniel Broughton, and Paul Mazyck indicates that this circular magazine was erected shortly before 1740. They petitioned the upper and lower houses of the General Assembly for damages since the "Public" had constructed a magazine on their property, which made this lot and the four adjoining lots useless.<sup>97</sup>

A map of the siege of Charleston in 1780 shows the area with barracks for five hundred, a magazine, and a "Sugar House."<sup>98</sup> During this Revolutionary War conflict, an explosion destroyed the workhouse [poorhouse] and a powder magazine, probably the circular magazine which stood where the jail is now. An 1857 edition of Harper's New Monthly Magazine dramatically portrays this event. The article states that the area contained a "pest house," a prison or house for the insane and the poor, an arsenal, barracks for soldiers, and a powder magazine. When the city surrendered, the British ordered the citizens to relinquish their weapons and deposit them at the arsenal. They carelessly gathered "their guns, fowling-pieces, rifles, muskets, pistols, all crammed to the muzzle with the remaining cartridges of their late proprietors; cartridge-boxes, powder-horns, all recklessly into one heap. The result was an explosion which shook the city to its foundation."<sup>99</sup> The blast destroyed the magazine, the poorhouse, the guardhouse, the barracks, and the arsenal, and killed most of the soldiers and civilians in the area. Several bodies were hurled against the neighboring Unitarian Church on Archdale Street.

Captain Ewald, a [Hessian] soldier fighting for the British during the siege of Charleston, gives a seemingly more accurate account of the event. In his journal entry of May 15, Ewald describes how the powder magazine blew up when the artillery placed the muskets of the prisoners in this building. The resulting fire destroyed six houses in the area, including the poorhouse and a brothel. Ewald also notes that the explosion blew several soldiers and civilians against a neighboring

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<sup>96</sup>Plat 90, McCrady Plat Collection, RMC, Charleston, SC.

<sup>97</sup>"Historical Notes," South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, 10 October 1909, 248.

<sup>98</sup>"Plan of the Operations of the Siege of Charleston," 1780, copy in Emmett Robinson Papers, Research Notes, Manuscript Collection, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.

<sup>99</sup>"Charleston," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, June 1857, 15-16.

church, presumably the Unitarian Church on Archdale Street. He blames the "carelessness of the English" for the explosion and believes that the disaster could have been greater if the neighboring magazine, only two hundred paces away, had also caught fire.<sup>100</sup> This second magazine may be the rectangular magazine near the corner of Back (Franklin) and Queen streets, which was built around 1748 and appears on several later plats.<sup>101</sup>

Charles Fraser also mentions the powder magazine explosion in his memoirs. While considering the number of older buildings in Charleston demolished since his youth, Fraser notices that only two of the churches from his childhood are still standing. One of them, Dr. Gilman's church on Archdale Street, had a portion of its tower removed during a powder magazine explosion. Fraser remembers that,

of all the churches in Charleston, from the earliest period of my recollection to the present day, there are but two standing - St. Michael's, and Dr. Gilman's, in Archdale-street. Upon the tower of the latter, history had set a mark, which has been unfortunately obliterated. For, when Charleston was a British garrison, a building in which powder was stored, in its vicinity, (viz. at the corner of Mazyck and Magazine-streets,) exploded, and a fragment striking the northwest angle of the tower, knocked out a part of it. The mark remained there until within a few years, when it was repaired.<sup>102</sup>

Dr Gilman's church most likely corresponds to the Unitarian church on Archdale Street, upon which the force of the explosion hurled several bodies.

Poorhouse:

In the early colonial period, church vestries were primarily responsible for the care of the poor in Charleston. The Provincial Assembly passed an act in 1712 providing for the election of two Commissioners of the Poor at Easter for St. Philip's Parish. These commissioners and wardens of the parish were authorized to levy a small tax on real property for charitable enterprises.<sup>103</sup> The vestry of St. Philip's collected these taxes and provided food, shelter, and medical attention for the elderly, the poor, and the disabled, and also arranged for their burials. Since this occurred before the

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<sup>100</sup>Bernhard A. Uhlendorf, translator and editor, The Siege of Charleston, History and Political Science vol. XII (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1938), 89-90.

<sup>101</sup>Plats 173 and 7337, McCrady Plat Collection, RMC, Charleston, SC. Robert P. Stockton, "Streets and Structures," Information for Guides of Historic Charleston (Charleston: City of Charleston, Department of Tourism, 1985), 328.

<sup>102</sup>Charles Fraser, My Reminiscences, 35.

<sup>103</sup>"Department of Charities," Yearbook of the City of Charleston, 1880 (Charleston, SC: The News and Courier Presses, 1880), 42.



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establishment of formal hospitals or a poorhouse, the vestry advertised for private citizens to take in the homeless and nurse them.<sup>104</sup>

As the number of paupers multiplied during the 1730s and the citizens of Charleston became concerned, the demands on the vestry increased along with the need for higher taxes. The vestry also felt that the private dwellings rented for the sick and poor were inadequate, dilapidated, and costly.<sup>105</sup> The Grand Jury presentment published in the South Carolina Gazette demonstrates these feelings:

We present as a Grievance the Want of a Work House to punish idle and disorderly People, and prevent the great Increase of Poor in Charlestown, who by flocking in from different parts of this Province, increase the annual Charge, and become a very great burden on the Inhabitants of the same.<sup>106</sup>

St. Philip's Vestry petitioned the assembly in 1734 to build a workhouse that would serve as an infirmary and reduce the costs of caring for paupers in private homes. This poorhouse was to provide "a controlled environment to regulate the morals of the uninhibited."<sup>107</sup> Responding to the petition, the assembly passed an act authorizing the vestry to raise £2,000 immediately and £1,000 annually to build and maintain a hospital on part of the "Burying Ground" facing the newly-created Mazyck Street. The building, probably a simple wood frame structure, was completed by 1738. The assembly then elected five commissioners and appointed a warden to supervise the inmates, while the physician of St. Philip's Parish attended the sick at the house.<sup>108</sup>

By 1768 the number of poor greatly increased and the assembly resolved to erect a new workhouse. The Grand Jury, St. Philip's vestry and a private institution called the Fellowship Society worked together in advocating a new poorhouse. They felt that the old poorhouse and hospital, with its "putrid smells, filthy, crowded rooms and indiscriminate mixing of poor widows, prostitutes, and thieves," was unfit for human occupancy.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>Walter J. Fraser, Jr., Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 56. Barbara L. Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, Assisting the Poor in Charleston 1670 - 1860 (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>105</sup>Walter J. Fraser, Jr., Charleston! Charleston!, 56-7.

<sup>106</sup>The South Carolina Gazette, March 23 to 30, 1733-34.

<sup>107</sup>Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 5.

<sup>108</sup>Walter J. Fraser, Jr., Charleston! Charleston!, 57. Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 5.

<sup>109</sup>Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 17.

After workmen completed the new poorhouse and the warden transferred the inmates to the new structure, the old building was used only as a place of confinement and correction for fugitive seamen, runaway slaves, vagrants, and disorderly people.<sup>110</sup> The act authorizing the construction of a new poorhouse also appropriated the old poorhouse as a place of correction. According to the Statutes at Large of South Carolina, the authorities were to incarcerate and punish slight offenders in this newly-established workhouse and house of correction as dictated by the present laws.<sup>111</sup>

Approximately ten years later, the powder magazine explosion during the siege of Charleston apparently destroyed the poorhouse. After the Revolutionary War and the incorporation of Charleston in 1783, the responsibility for the poor passed to the commissioners of the poor appointed by the city council. Although it is unclear exactly when the poorhouse was rebuilt after the war, these men were probably responsible for its reconstruction. Plats and maps of the city of Charleston from 1786, 1788, and 1802 reveal that this new building stood on Mazyck Street between Magazine and Queen streets.<sup>112</sup> According to a plat dated 1786, this structure consisted of three separate buildings surrounded by a yard and brick wall. The main building facing Mazyck Street measured approximately 40' x 47', while the two buildings flanking it to the rear were roughly 39' x 30'. The neighboring lots to the north and to the west appear to have been divided into garden plots, perhaps to subsidize the cost of feeding the inmates confined in this area.<sup>113</sup>

A description of the brick building from 1826 states that it was three stories high and crowned with a large cupola for ventilation. An outbuilding housed the insane inmates until they could be transferred to the new Lunatic Asylum in Columbia. In his Statistics of South Carolina, Robert Mills describes the "cleanliness and order" of the poorhouse's "roomy and airy" interior accommodations." The building provided for an average of 983 "paupers and out-door pensioners" every year.<sup>114</sup>

During his travels through the United States in 1825 and 1826, Karl Bernhard also visited the poorhouse and asylum in Charleston. His description deals mostly with the inhumane conditions at the institution and the unfortunate people confined there. A

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<sup>110</sup>Benjamin Joseph Klebaner, "Public Poor Relief in Charleston, 1800-1860," South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine 55 (October 1954), 210. McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, 7:91.

<sup>111</sup>McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, 7:91.

<sup>112</sup>Edmund Petrie, "Ichnography of Charleston, South Carolina," surveyed August 2, 1788 for the use of the Phoenix Fire-Company of London. G. Bonnos, "Plan of the City of Charleston, South Carolina," Engraved for the Patrons of J. J. Negrin's Directorial Register & Almanac, 1802.

<sup>113</sup>Plat 173 and 7337, McCrady Plat Collection, Charleston County RMC, Charleston, South Carolina.

<sup>114</sup>Robert Mills, Statistics of South Carolina (Charleston, SC: Hurlbut and Lloyd, 1826; reprint, Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1972), 431-2.

separate infirmary housed the sick, while the more healthy slept on the floor of the building. Bernhard notes that only those who were unable to work were admitted. He also expresses astonishment at seeing a cart for corpses and a pile of empty coffins in the yard of the structure, which implied that many of the people who entered the hospital did not leave it. In his journal, Bernhard describes the poorhouse and yard:

The poor-house, an old building raised by subscription, contains one hundred and sixty-six paupers. It will only admit such poor persons as are completely disabled. Those who can labour a little can obtain the employment they desire, and then receive good attendance and proper support. The sick were taken care of in a distinct infirmary, where each had a separate bed. The healthy slept upon the floor. I enquired why the sick were not provided with iron bedsteads in place of the wooden ones they occupied? and was informed that it was from apprehension of the prevailing severe thunder-storms.

Connected with the Poor-house is a Magdalen Asylum, which provides shelter and care for thirty unfortunate beings. It struck me forcibly, as I saw under an open shed in the yard where the poor walked about, the dead cart, and close by it numbers of empty coffins piled up together, that the scene might be very well introduced in a monastery of the order of La Trappe.<sup>115</sup>

Several attempts were made to require able-bodied individuals confined in the poorhouse to work toward their keep. The first effort occurred during Jefferson's Embargo of 1807, when a group of local leaders, fearing shortages of textiles, sponsored the South Carolina Homespun Company. Although the city council demanded that all inhabitants of the poorhouse able to work spin cotton thread or suffer solitary confinement, the enterprise failed. Only eighteen of the inmates were fit enough to pick, card, or spin the material, and when trade with Europe reopened, all hope for the project ended.<sup>116</sup> Approximately ten years later, the commissioners of the poor installed a fly-shuttle loom in the poorhouse to produce cotton cloth. Promoters of this venture thought it would turn the "idle poor" into "contented workers" and help finance their cost to the city. Cotton producers would no longer have to send their material to manufacturers in the north. Like the earlier enterprises, this effort failed because few of the poorhouse inmates could be trained.<sup>117</sup>

Some minor tasks had been performed by inmates at the poorhouse in the past; the men made coffins, crushed rock, or picked oakum (the recycling of old tarred ropes into caulking for ships), while the women did laundry or tried to weave cotton cloth

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<sup>115</sup>Karl Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, Travels Through North America, During the Years 1825 and 1826, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1828), 10.

<sup>116</sup>Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 72.

<sup>117</sup>Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 72.

during the textile experiments.<sup>118</sup> In 1838 the poorhouse commissioners made yet another attempt to employ inmates by proposing to redesign the treadmill for the grinding of corn. As this form of labor was used to punish slaves and blacks at the neighboring workhouse, critics did not want to subject paupers to the treadmill and obscure the distinction between poor whites and slaves. After studying this issue, the commissioners were forced to reject the idea.<sup>119</sup> They eventually relinquished the hope of getting the inmates of the poorhouse to work regularly. Indeed, the idea of the poorhouse, a place to punish those who could not support themselves, discouraged the able-bodied from staying there and made any attempts to harness their labor useless.<sup>120</sup>

As the population of Charleston grew, the poorhouse on Mazyck Street inevitably became overcrowded. In 1852 the commissioners found a new site for the institution, the former Charleston Factory Company on Columbus Street, which was an old cotton factory that the city had recently purchased. The commissioners then approved Louis J. Barbot's plans to adapt the cotton factory to function as a poorhouse.<sup>121</sup> The official transfer of inmates from the old poorhouse to the new building, renamed the almshouse, took place on February 28, 1856.<sup>122</sup> According to one local observer, the "buzzing wheel and humming loom give place to pallet and cot, the bell no longer calls the young and active to their rest; ...over the portals where we read 'Industria,' we now read 'Charity.'"<sup>123</sup>

After this relocation, the old poorhouse became the "Bettering House" or the "House of Correction" for the confinement of vagrants, transient lunatics, and convicts sentenced by the mayor's courts.<sup>124</sup> The city also used the building to house indigent free blacks, who had been living in some rooms of the poorhouse since 1842.<sup>125</sup> Because free blacks paid taxes, including an assessment for poor relief, and performed road duty or pioneer duty in the militia, they could receive poor relief.

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<sup>118</sup>Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 72.

<sup>119</sup>Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 108.

<sup>120</sup>Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 72-3.

<sup>121</sup>Kenneth Severns, Charleston, Antebellum Architecture and Civic Destiny (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 164.

<sup>122</sup>Yearbook of the City of Charleston, 1880 (Charleston, SC: The News and Courier Presses, 1880), 43-4.

<sup>123</sup>Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 163.

<sup>124</sup>Klebaner, "Public Poor Relief," 211. Severns, Charleston, 165.

<sup>125</sup>Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 164.

Earlier, however, the commissioners only admitted insane free blacks to the poor house and hired black nurses to care for them.<sup>126</sup>

Workhouse:

It is unclear exactly when the first workhouse was established in Charleston. The 1768 act authorizing the construction of another poorhouse and hospital appropriated the former poorhouse as a workhouse and place of correction. The act further implies that changes in the statutes prompted the former poorhouse to house fugitive seamen and runaway slaves along with the paupers. Due to an increase in the number of poor in Charleston, the assembly then approved the erection of a new institution for indigents separate from the other inmates. The old poorhouse was only to confine and punish these fugitives and minor offenders.<sup>127</sup>

Several early accounts of Charleston also mention a "Sugar House" used for the correction of disobedient slaves. Operation of the workhouse apparently shifted to this institution at an unknown date. The first known mention of the Sugar House appears on a map of the siege of Charleston in 1780. The map displays a marshy area to the west of town which contains a "Sugar House" slightly southwest of an old magazine and barracks for five hundred men. According to early descriptions of the institution, the building was used to punish slaves by whipping them. Masters could send their slaves to this establishment and, for a small price, have them "corrected." In his travel journal John Lambert writes:

The Negro slaves and servants are not allowed to be out after the beating of the drum at eight o'clock, otherwise they are taken up by the guard when going its rounds, and confined in the gaol. The master or mistress must pay a dollar before they can be liberated, otherwise the offender receives a flogging at the sugar house.... For common offenses they [slaves] are either flogged at home by their masters or mistresses, or sent to a place next to the jail in Broad-street, called the Sugar House, where a man is employed to flog them at a rate of a shilling per dozen lashes.<sup>128</sup>

The city also held runaway slaves temporarily at the workhouse until their masters could retrieve them. The master of the workhouse then placed an advertisement in various newspapers in an attempt to identify the slaves' owners. If the masters did not claim their slaves within a certain time period, usually sixty days, the sheriff sold

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<sup>126</sup>Kiebaner, "Public Poor Relief," 215-6.

<sup>127</sup>McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, 7:90.

<sup>128</sup>John Lambert, Travels Through Lower Canada, and the United States of North America, in the Years 1806, 1807, and 1808, 3 vols. (London: Richard Phillips, 1810), 2:362-3, 413.

them to pay for their room and board.<sup>129</sup> An advertisement placed in the Charleston Times in 1802 by the sheriff announcing an impending auction illustrates how this process worked. The notice reads as follows:

City Sheriff's Sale.

*Will be sold before the store of Messrs. Aertsen & Co. on THURSDAY, the 4th of February next, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon, agreeably to an ordinance, entitled, "An Ordinance for the Regulation of the Work-house of the city of Charleston," passed and ratified the 6th of August, 1794.*

A NEGRO MAN SLAVE

Named BOSTON, about 38 years of age, 5 feet 9 inches high; has a scar on the bridge of his nose, and lame in the right leg; says he belongs to Mr. Buedouit [?], living in Georgetown. Said fellow was committed to the work-house as a run-away, and advertised by the master of said work-house, according to law, on the 20th, 22nd and 24th of December, 1800, in the City Gazette; published by Messrs. Freneau and Paine. The said negro not having been claimed, he is now to be sold in order to defray the expense of his keeping, which does not exceed the time limited by law.

The Sugar House apparently stood slightly southwest of the jail on Broad Street. The 1802 City Directory of Charleston lists the workhouse as still located on Savage Street and the southwest corner of Broad Street.<sup>130</sup> However, after the completion of the new jail in November 1802, the legislature appropriated the former jail for a workhouse. The workhouse then joined the poorhouse, jail, and powder magazine on the public square. A plan of the city from 1802 places all of these institutions in the swampy area bounded by Queen, Magazine, and Mazyck streets.<sup>131</sup> Charles Fraser notes in his published memoirs that the workhouse succeeded the old district jail.<sup>132</sup> Although the location of the workhouse shifted to the old jail, many people still referred to the institution as the Sugar House. As one traveler notes in his journal,

The house of Correction[,] called in Charleston the Sugar house[,] to which the inhabitants send their slaves to be flogged was originally a sugar refinery and still retains its name[,] here such scenes of flagellation are witnessed

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<sup>129</sup>George C. Rogers, Jr., Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1980), 21. The Times (Charleston, SC), 23 January, 1802.

<sup>130</sup>The Charleston City Directory, 1802 (Charleston, SC: Charleston Library Society, 1951), 85, Microfilm Collection, Charleston Library Society, Charleston, South Carolina.

<sup>131</sup>Bonnos, "Plan of the City of Charleston."

<sup>132</sup>Charles Fraser, Reminiscences of Charleston, 26.

that one can not [subject?] a Negroe with a more efficacious Punishment than that of a visit to the Sugar house.<sup>133</sup>

Even in the 1840s, locals continued to identify the Sugar House with the workhouse. According to the cross index of the 1840-41 City Directory, the block of Magazine Street bounded by Mazyck and Back streets contained an engine house, the Sugar House, and the jail.<sup>134</sup> Perhaps Charlestonians still referred to the workhouse as the Sugar House because it had a similar purpose. Masters continued to send their slaves to the workhouse to be punished, and officials imprisoned slaves convicted of minor offenses and those awaiting trial at the workhouse.<sup>135</sup>

The 1848 census of Charleston notes, however, that slaves who had been sentenced to death were usually detained at the jail until their execution. Slaves and Blacks caught out after curfew without written permission were sent to the city guard house before they were punished.<sup>136</sup>

Several accounts of the workhouse also described the treadmill, which the city installed in the 1820s to both punish the inmates and submit them to manual labor. Masters could send their slaves to the workhouse to be flogged or work the treadmill without having to "discipline" the slaves themselves. It was a way for the slave owners to avoid the disagreeable nature of slavery. Basil Hall describes the treadmill as part of the social system:

The Workhouse, which we next visited, is a sort of Bridewell, where several parties of offenders were at work on the tread-wheel - the only one which I saw in action in America, and with no great effect, I was told. It seems, indeed, an essential part of the system of slavery, that the lash should be used as a means of enforcing obedience. But as the disagreeable nature of this discipline prevents the master from administering it at home, the offending slave is sent to the Workhouse with a note and a piece of money, on delivering which he receives so many stripes, and is sent back again.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup>Dunlap Diary, 1810, copy at the Historic Charleston Foundation, Charleston, South Carolina, original at the New York Historical Society, Manuscript Department, New York.

<sup>134</sup>The Charleston City Directory, 1840-41.

<sup>135</sup>J. L. Dawson and W. H. De Saussure, Census of the City of Charleston 1848 (Charleston, SC: J. B. Nixon, 1949), 53.

<sup>136</sup>Dawson and De Saussure, Census of the City, 53.

<sup>137</sup>Basil Hall, Travels in North America, in the Years 1827 and 1828, 3 volumes, Foreign Travelers in America 1810-1935 series (Edinburgh: Ballantyne and Company, 1829; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1974), vol 3, 167. According to Blake McKelvy, Brideswell was one of the first houses of correction, established in 1552 in an old royal palace in London called Brideswell. The building was used as a workhouse for the confinement and correction of 'dissolute' vagrants removed from their ancestral lands. McKelvy, 2.

Karl Bernhard, who also traveled through the United States in the mid-1820s, seemed to support the use of the treadmill. His report of the public institutions of Charleston implies that the master of the workhouse ran the building in a neat and orderly fashion. He also noted that the structure was in a much better condition than the neighboring district jail. In addition, Bernhard described the complicated and arduous work required by the treadmill. The workhouse, which contained two treadmills in an outbuilding, could employ twenty-four inmates at a time. Six men or women would power the mill while six others waited to take their place on the next shift. Bernhard felt that the city should erect two more treadmills to engage more inmates in this form of labor. In his account of the workhouse, he states:

The house displays throughout a remarkable neatness; black overseers go about everywhere armed with cow-hides....Within a year, flogging occurs less frequently; that is to say, a tread-mill has been erected in a back building of the prison, in which there are two tread-wheels in operation. Each employs twelve prisoners, who work a mill for grinding corn, and thereby contribute to the support of the prison. Six tread at once upon each wheel, while six rest upon a bench placed behind the wheel. Every half minute the left hand man steps off the tread-wheel, while the five others move to the left to fill up the vacant place;...Both sexes tread promiscuously upon the wheel. Since, however, only twenty-four prisoners find employment at once on both wheels, the idle are obliged in the interval to sit upon the floor in the upper chambers, and observe a strict silence....To provide against this state of idleness, there should be another pair of tread-wheels erected. The negroes entertain a strong fear of the tread-mills, and regard flogging as the lighter evil! Of about three hundred and sixty, who, since the erection of these tread-mills, have been employed upon them, only six have been sent back a second time.<sup>138</sup>

Even Robert Mills advocated the use of the treadmill and felt that it would effectively utilize slave labor. Like Hall, he also noted that masters could send their slaves to the workhouse to run the treadmill without having to discipline the slaves themselves. The treadmill would keep the slaves productive and obedient, which would better them, and allow slave owners to avoid the cruel aspects of slavery. According to Mills,

Such a mode of correction has been long a desideratum with many of our citizens, who heretofore have been often induced to pass over faults in their slaves demeriting correction, rather than resort to coercive measures with them, who now will, without doing violence to their feelings, be able to break

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<sup>138</sup>Bernhard, *Travels Through North America*, 9-10.



their idle habits, and subject them to a discipline that promises, morally, as well as physically, to be beneficial to them.<sup>139</sup>

Around 1840, growing racial tensions and possible slave revolts concerned the city. The lack of control over the daily operation of the workhouse contributed to these anxieties. Consequently, the city removed the management of the workhouse from the hands of renters who had run it for a profit and placed it under the direction of a city official.<sup>140</sup> The city also created an official slave market, run by the new master of the workhouse, which was to remedy the problems of Charleston's growing slave trade. All public slave sales were then conducted at the newly-created market, while slaves awaiting the auctions were held at the workhouse.<sup>141</sup> The number of slaves brought to the city to be sold, however, soon exceeded the capacity of the workhouse. The additional slaves were detained in the jail yard until they could be sold at the next market.

In the 1850s the city built or remodeled several of the public buildings in Charleston, including some of the structures located on the public square defined by Queen, Magazine, Logan, and Franklin streets. The city had several motives for improving these buildings. By remodeling in a current style, Charleston thought it could compete with larger cities for national stature and regain some of its past prominence. The people of Charleston also felt a moral obligation to provide basic services for a growing lower and immigrant class that needed public assistance.<sup>142</sup>

During this period of improvement, the city remodeled the district jail, moved the poorhouse to a refurbished building, and rebuilt the workhouse. The new workhouse, designed by Edward Jones and built by Christopher Trumbo, was a large Medieval-style building with castellated towers. The workhouse provided an architectural precedent for other public structures in Charleston; a few years later, the city remodeled the Charleston District Jail along similar lines.<sup>143</sup> According to Kenneth Severns, the adoption of this style of architecture transformed vernacular buildings such as the jail and the workhouse into high-style architecture.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup>Mills, Statistics of South Carolina, 420-1.

<sup>140</sup>William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, The Web of Progress (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 166.

<sup>141</sup>Pease and Pease, The Web of Progress, 166.

<sup>142</sup>Bellows, Benevolence Among Slaveholders, 164.

<sup>143</sup>Stockton, The Great Shock, 329-30.

<sup>144</sup>Severns, Charleston, 184.

The new workhouse, however, had a relatively short life span. After the Civil War, the building could no longer serve its original purpose, and the city converted it into a hospital for blacks. The institution became part of the City Hospital and joined several other medical buildings in the area, including the Marine Hospital, Roper Hospital, and the Medical College of South Carolina. The building continued to serve poor blacks as a hospital until 1886, when severe earthquake damage prompted officials to condemn and raze the building.

#### Charleston's First Jail:

While St. Philip's vestry and the Grand Jury were advocating the need for a poorhouse, they also recommended the construction of a proper jail. At that time, the provost marshal of the province leased private dwellings to serve as jail houses for the confinement of hardened criminals. Black and White criminals and debtors were imprisoned together in these small rented rooms. Many criminals escaped because the rooms were often left unguarded. The large number of fugitive slaves, unruly indigents, and criminals in Charleston concerned citizens, who felt that the lack of a well-built, secure jail was responsible for the breakdown of law and order.<sup>145</sup> The citizens' complaints were summarized in a Grand Jury presentment published in the South Carolina Gazette.

We present it as a very great Grievance and Damage to the Inhabitants of this Province, the Want of a public Prison, whereby Rogues have often made their escape from public Justice, much to the Encouragement of Villany, and the Disturbance of the publick Peace; And further, that unfortunate Debtors, for want of a more convenient Place, are kept promiscuously with Criminals both Whites and Blacks; which is a great Aggravation to their Misfortunes, and makes their Case most miserable.<sup>146</sup>

Although the act for the poorhouse passed, the motion for an adequate jail did not, perhaps because the public saw little difference between a pauper and a common criminal.<sup>147</sup>

In the mid- to late eighteenth century, Charles Woodmason traveled through South Carolina and described the inhumane condition of the private dwellings that the provost marshal rented for jail space. Woodmason wrote of the crowded, uncivilized state of the facility in his published journal, The Carolina Back Country on the Eve of the Revolution.

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<sup>145</sup>Walter J. Fraser, Jr., Charleston! Charleston!, 57.

<sup>146</sup>The South-Carolina Gazette, March 23 to 30, 1733-34.

<sup>147</sup>Bellows, 5.

CHARLESTON COUNTY JAIL  
(Charleston District Jail)  
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'Close and Stinking Gaol' A Person would be in better Situation in the French Kings Gallies, or the Prisons of Turkey or Barbary, than in this dismal Place - Which is a small House hir'd by the Provost Marshall containing 5 or 6 Rooms, about 12 feet square each and in one of these Rooms have 16 Debtors been crowded - And as the Heat of the Weather in C.T. [Charleston] in Summer is almost intolerable, What must the Situation of the Prisoners then be? They often have not Room to lye at length, but succeed each other to lye down - one was suffocated by the Heat of this Summer - and when a Coffin was sent for the Corpse, there was no room to admit it, till some Wretches lay down, made their Wretched Carcasses, a Table to lay the Coffin on - Men and Women are crowded promiscuously - No Necessary to retire to - The Necessities of Nature must be done by both Sexes in the presence of each other.<sup>148</sup>

Woodmason also notes that in 1764 Richard Cumherland rented a private house to serve as a jail. Because of the small size of the house, the deputy was forced to confine several prisoners together in a cruel manner.<sup>149</sup>

An increase in arrests in mid-eighteenth-century Charleston strained these already inadequate prison facilities. The town again made formal complaints concerning the need for a proper jail and the insecure state of the current dwellings rented for this purpose. Provost Marshall Lowndes also appealed to the general assembly to erect a suitable jail and noted that South Carolina was the only British colony that had never built a prison.<sup>150</sup> The assembly initially rejected these requests for a jail, perhaps due to the costs involved in building such a structure. However, in 1770, the assembly finally appropriated money for the construction of a jail. The act not only appointed commissioners for the project, but also chose the location and plan of the building, and authorized the commissioners to hire workmen for its construction.<sup>151</sup>

The assembly apparently awarded the contract for the building to William Rigby Naylor and James Brown, who had recently completed building the city's new guard house. According to Walter Fraser, Naylor also drew the plans for the exchange building and probably designed the new jail.<sup>152</sup> Several old maps and plats of Charleston reveal the approximate dimensions of this structure and its location on the

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<sup>148</sup>Charles Woodmason, The Carolina Back Country on the Eve of the Revolution, ed. Richard J. Hooker (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 236.

<sup>149</sup>Woodmason, The Carolina Back Country, 237.

<sup>150</sup>Walter J. Fraser, Jr., Charleston! Charleston!, 77-8.

<sup>151</sup>Statutes at Large of South Carolina, vol. 4, 325.

<sup>152</sup>Walter J. Fraser, Jr., Charleston! Charleston!, 128.

south side of Magazine Street near the poorhouse.<sup>153</sup> Although established as a jail, the building resembled a dwelling house; a plat from 1783 depicts the double-pile center-passage structure with a detached kitchen to the southeast. The main building measures approximately 45' x 40', while the lot is roughly 105' x 160'. This plat also displays what appear to be garden plots in the rear of the jail yard; these may have been planted to help defray the cost of the convicts' upkeep.<sup>154</sup>

Several written accounts describe the layout and condition of the jail. The Duke de la Rochefoucault Liancourt traveled through the United States between 1795 and 1797 and recounts visiting the jail in his published journal. According to his report, the small jail was several stories high and contained a few rooms, one of which housed the debtors separately from the rest of the prisoners. The small size of the prison, combined with the number of people incarcerated in it, prompted the jailor to chain the prisoners. Since the yard was not enclosed, the inmates had no form of exercise beyond walking in their rooms. The Duke de la Rochefoucault Liancourt writes:

I have visited the prisons of Charleston, which, it is asserted, are the best in the State of South Carolina; they form one single building, which is several stories high. The rooms are pretty spacious and airy, but few in number. Debtors are in a separate room. Felons, either imprisoned on suspicion or convicted, are confined with the police-prisoners, and are all treated on the same footing. They are all in irons; a dreadful treatment; but which is the necessary consequence of the smallness of the prison, and of the facility of plotting mutinies. The prisoners are permitted only to walk about in their room; the prison having no court where they might take their exercise. The jailor is allowed one shilling a-day for the board of each prisoner, for which money he gives him a pound of bread every day, and meat three times a week.<sup>155</sup>

After many years of use, the jail fell into a state of disrepair. According to several Grand Jury presentments from Charleston District, the poor condition of the structure was harmful to the prisoners, and the lack of a northern wall around the building made it insecure. The jail roof leaked in even the slightest rain, and exposure to the elements caused several of the inmates to become ill. As one Grand Jury presentment states:

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<sup>153</sup>Edmund Petrie, "Ichnography of Charleston, South Carolina," taken from a survey of 2 August 1788, for the Phoenix Fire-Company of London. Plats 7337, 173, 155, and 170, McCrady Plat Collection, Charleston County, RMC.

<sup>154</sup>Plat 7337, McCrady Plat Collection, Charleston County, RMC.

<sup>155</sup>Duke de la Rochefoucault Liancourt, Travels Through the United States of North America, in the Years 1795, 1796, 1797, vol. I (London: T. Davidson, 1799) 565.

The Situation of those now confined is truly distressing and shocking to humanity; the noxious damps have compelled the removal of some to hospitals; and in the opinion of the Jury, unless speedily removed to a more wholesome habitation many of them must be numbered with the dead.<sup>156</sup>

The lack of a northern jail wall enabled the convicts to communicate with people outside the building. Rather than fearing inmates would escape, the Grand Jury appeared to be most concerned that outsiders might provide the inmates with liquor. Its January 1793 presentment complained that the lack of a wall allowed prisoners to have "a communication with the people in the Street who supply them with spiritual Liquors & by which means they get Intoxicated and become very unruly as we are informed by the Jailor."<sup>157</sup>

The jail's inhumane and insecure state soon prompted the legislature to request the erection of a new facility. Although the assembly set aside land for a jail as early as 1783, little progress toward the building's construction occurred until 1794, when several men were appointed to serve as building commissioners. These commissioners delayed the jail's construction until the price of labor and materials fell or until the assembly could provide more adequate funds for the building's construction. The changing criminal codes in the United States also encouraged the commissioners to wait in the hope that South Carolina would adopt penal reforms, which might influence the design of the jail. Upon the completion of the new jail, the assembly converted the old building into a workhouse or house of correction.<sup>158</sup>

#### Criminal Code Reforms:

One of the first movements to reform the penal system in the United States began with the Quakers of Pennsylvania. Through their efforts, Pennsylvania abolished the punishments of death, mutilation, and whipping for most criminal cases in the state in 1786. Imprisonment replaced corporal punishment, while solitary confinement supplanted capital punishment. To carry out these reforms, the state built the Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia, which grouped convicts according to their crimes and provided separate cells for those sentenced to solitary confinement.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>156</sup>Presentments of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, September 1798, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDAH.

<sup>157</sup>Presentments of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, January 1793, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDAH.

<sup>158</sup>Commissioners for Building the Gaol in Charleston, 8 November 1796, Governor's Messages, Records of the General Assembly, Microfilm Collection, SCDAH.

<sup>159</sup>G. de Beaumont and A. de Toqueville, *On the Penitentiary System in the United States, and its Application in France*, trans. Francis Lieber (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1833; reprint, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 37.

Robert Smith designed the stone building in Philadelphia to serve as both a jail and house of correction. The structure had an "imposing" two-story facade on Walnut Street and two wings extending into a yard surrounded by a stone wall. Large rooms in one of the wings housed debtors and those convicted of misdemeanors, while the other wing accommodated more serious offenders. A converted workhouse at the rear of the jail yard served as dormitory rooms for debtors and minor criminals. The upper two floors of the new building contained a cell block with sixteen cells for those sentenced to solitary confinement.<sup>160</sup> Caleb Lownes, one of the inspectors and managers of the institution, introduced a work program that included a variety of handicrafts ranging from weaving to picking oakum. The convicts, confined in their separate areas at night, were released during the day to work at various crafts.<sup>161</sup>

The apparent success of the Walnut Street Jail attracted several visitors and encouraged other states to follow its example, including South Carolina. The building commissioners for the Charleston Jail presumably knew of this institution and wished to imitate it on a smaller scale. They wanted a secure and well-designed structure with separate accommodations for debtors. Using the Walnut Street Jail as a model, the commissioners proposed appropriating the old jail building for a workhouse or house of correction. Their letter to the governor of South Carolina, written while they were overseeing the jail's construction, reveals many of these considerations.

In the Autumn of the same year [1794] we were furnished with several plans and projections - some of which would be very eligible, being calculated to unite strength & Security with convenience & a due regard to the Health of Prisoners: & also to afford the desirable means of accommodating unfortunate Debtors, without Lodging them with Felons & Culprits.... We beg leave to add in this place, that we have indulged in common with most of our fellow Citizens, a Solicitude that this State might not be the last in the Union to ameliorate their Criminal Code of Laws so as to render it less Sanguinary, & better adapted to the Genius of a free Country. We considered, and still consider the present as a favorable opportunity to lay the Basis of such a System; by projecting the Charleston Gaol upon a plan similar in design, though not equal in extent to that in Philadelphia. Believing that the time must ere' long arrive when that system will be adopted; We have the best ground to Conclude that it will then be found to have been highly Aconomical [sic], were the Legislature at present to authorize that View to be so far combined in the present building as to make it easily and with little additional expense converted into a place of correction & Labour hereafter.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup>McKelvy, American Prisons, 3.

<sup>161</sup>McKelvey, American Prisons, 8-9.

<sup>162</sup>Commissioners for Building the Gaol in Charleston, 8 November 1796, Governor's Messages, Records of the General Assembly, Microfilm Collection, SCDH.

Although other states also imitated the program installed at the Walnut Street Jail, the system was not necessarily successful; it was corrupted by 'contamination,' those who were housed together and worked together, and by 'indolence,' those in solitary confinement who were not required to work.<sup>163</sup> Rather than dismiss with solitary confinement as a method of criminal reform, however, efforts were made to combine its beneficial effects with those of labor. Prisoners were confined in single cells at night and made to work in strict silence during the day in common workshops.<sup>164</sup>

Officials thought that labor would both help rehabilitate criminals and spare the state some expense in their upkeep. Mandatory work would also clarify the distinction between the jail and the almshouse, making the jail "something else than a rest home between arrests."<sup>165</sup> As in the Charleston poorhouse, these efforts failed due to poor management and lack of incentive on the part of the inmates.<sup>166</sup> Other institutions endeavored to use labor as a method of punishment. New York experimented with a treadmill, attempting to have prisoners turn the mill to discipline themselves while contributing to their upkeep. As with other enterprises involving inmate labor, this venture was not successful.<sup>167</sup>

The state of South Carolina, and the District of Charleston in particular, also made efforts to reform its penal system by incorporating innovative combinations of labor and solitary confinement. In 1822 the state legislature resolved to add a wing to the Charleston District Jail that contained solitary cells for the confinement of criminals. This addition, designed by the prominent architect Robert Mills, included four fireproof floors to provide an adequate number of cells for hardened offenders. Shortly after the wing's completion, the Grand Jury of Charleston District recommended that the legislature authorize adding a treadmill to the jail. The Grand Jury noticed the lack of labor among the prisoners and felt that this form of correction could be substituted for the more archaic punishments of whipping and branding.<sup>168</sup> Its suggestion seems to have had little effect, however; no mention of a treadmill for the jail appears in later general assembly documents or accounts of the building.

Although Charleston's attempt to require some inmates to work a treadmill failed, several states found a way to combine solitary confinement and mandatory labor.

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<sup>163</sup>de Beaumont and de Toqueville, On the Penitentiary System, 38-9.

<sup>164</sup>de Beaumont and de Toqueville, On the Penitentiary System, 42.

<sup>165</sup>Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum, 92.

<sup>166</sup>Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum, 92-3.

<sup>167</sup>Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum, 93.

<sup>168</sup>Presentment of the Grand Jury, Charleston District, October 1826, Records of the General Assembly, Manuscript Collection, SCDAH.

According to Mark Rothman, many states adopted a military-style system for penal institutions. The prisoners in these institutions wore uniforms, followed a military schedule and were outfitted with cots, pails, and tin utensils. Prison architecture was associated with the Medieval style of building, which required functional, monumental construction. The thick walls, towers, and barred windows and doors were not only practical, but also gave the impression of strength and security identified with the fortresses of the Middle Ages.<sup>169</sup> Due to the nationwide popularity of this style for military facilities and prisons, several buildings in Charleston, including the jail and the workhouse, were remodeled or rebuilt along these lines.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Charleston County Jail is a tripartite structure centered on a north-south axis. The front portion of the jail consists of a three-story square-shaped addition flanked by towers, while the center section is a three-story rectangular cell block. The third section is a three-story octagonal addition extending from the rear of the central cell block. A decorative battlement runs along the top of the building, including the two towers flanking the main entry. A beltcourse runs at the sill height of the second- and third-story windows in some sections of the building, and decorative molding appears over several of the windows along the front and side facades.

2. Condition of fabric: The current condition of the Charleston District Jail is fair to poor. Since the county ceased using the building and sold it to the Housing Authority in 1939, the structure has been used primarily for storage. The lateral thrust of the vaulted floors has caused the east and west walls of the main cell block to splay outward. Concrete parging has peeled away from the masonry walls in many places. Vegetation grows from cracks in the walls and battlements. On the interior, the plaster walls and ceilings have peeled and cracked and show some signs of water damage. The tin-lined walls of the octagon are rusted. Several of the floor arches of the main block have collapsed. Many of the interior window and door moldings, doors and fireplace surrounds have been removed, along with many of the electrical, gas, and plumbing fixtures. In general, the building is in a state of disrepair.

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<sup>169</sup>Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum, 106.



B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The jail is a three-story building measuring roughly 98' x 112'. It is comprised of three main sections linked by a central passageway. The center cell block is three stories high and measures approximately 46' x 100'. To the north of this section, toward the front of the building facing Magazine Street, is a three-story, rectangular-shaped addition measuring 43' x 23' and flanked by two four-story towers roughly 12' square. The rear octagonal wing has five sides approximately 21' in length and two 18' sides; the eighth side connects the wing to the rest of the jail.

2. Foundations: Unable to determine.

3. Walls: The walls, roughly 2' thick, are of brick and covered with concrete parging scored to resemble stone.

4. Structural system: Load-bearing brick masonry walls with built-up ledges support a shallow-arch brick and concrete floor system in the main block. This structural system also contains intermediate cast-iron or steel I-beams and four section built up columns. The octagonal wing and jailer's quarters contain similar load-bearing brick masonry walls with rough-sawn wood floor joists (approximately 16" on center). Intermediate brick partition walls also support the wood flooring and ceiling in these sections of the jail.

The roof structure, a truss system built in the late nineteenth century after the 1886 earthquake, consists of a series of ten wood trusses approximately 10' on center with purlins notched into them. The ceiling joists are notched into the bottom of the trusses and covered with wood decking. A tongue and grove wood ceiling is attached to the underside of the decking over the main cell blocks. Over the hallway, wood furring strips are attached to the lathe and plaster. The roof structure of the octagon is similar to the truss construction of the main block.

5. Stairs, platform, awning: Wood stairs and a platform have been added to serve as a rear entry to the second floor of the jail's octagonal wing. Markings above the second floor doorway indicate that an awning once covered this entry.

6. Openings:

a. Doors: The jail has eight operating exterior doorways. The main entry to the jail is on the north facade of the front section, referred to as the jailer's

keep. This entry is emphasized by an arched opening with concentric brownstone rings capped by a decorative brownstone molding. A metal gate opens onto a foyer containing a glazed double door with two side lights serving as the entrance to the central hallway. The secondary entrance in the west tower of the north facade provides access to the jailer's quarters. Two doorways with wood doors, wood casings, and cast-iron gratings appear on the east and west facades of the jailer's keep.

Several doorways also appear along the east and west facades of the central cell block. On the east facade, a wooden double door along the first and second bays of the first floor was either a later addition or an enlargement of an earlier door. The first-floor center bay of the west facade also contained an early doorway, which has since been enclosed. The first bay of the first floor of the west facade has a large double door that appears to have been enlarged roughly 8" in height. The door jambs contain remnants of iron bars and have been scored to continue the illusion of stone from the side of the building. The south face of the octagon contains two rear entrances to the jail. Both the first- and second-floor doors between the first and second bays of this face appear to have been added.

b. Windows: The jail windows vary in size from 3' x 6-1/2' and 3' x 4-1/2' in the front section to 3-1/2' x 7' in the central block and 2' x 4-1/2' in the rear octagonal wing. The center bay of the five-bay front facade of the jailer's keep contains two double windows over the main entry. A decorative brownstone molding caps most of the windows in this section. The nine-over-nine double-hung windows have wood casings and sashes and wrought-iron bars anchored into the granite sills and lintels. The bars have been removed from the first and second bay third-floor windows on the west facade of the jailer's keep, possibly to provide access to a fire escape. The first bay third-floor window on the west facade and the fourth-floor windows on both sides of the tower are slightly smaller than the others. The first- and second-story windows on the east and west facades of the towers have been altered; the second-story windows on the east facade are completely sealed.

A decorative beltcourse runs at the sill height of the windows on the second and third floor on the north facade of the jailer's keep. The bases of the towers are battered below this first belt course. On the east and west facades, the beltcourse only runs at the sill height of the third-floor windows. The beltcourse on the west facade, however, has been cut away at three points, possibly for a fire escape.

As in the jailer's keep, a beltcourse runs at the sill height of the third-floor windows on the north, east, and west facades. A decorative molding caps the

third floor windows on these facades. The molding, fashioned to resemble the brownstone trim of the jailer's keep, is of brick covered with concrete parging.

The windows along the first floor of the central cell block are slightly smaller than the other windows of this section. These casement windows have eight lights per panel, wood casings and sashes, and wrought-iron bars anchored into granite sills and lintels. The iron bars have four heavy horizontal reinforcing members in addition to the three horizontal reinforcement bars found throughout the jail windows. The iron bars of the first-floor window of the first bay on the north facade have been removed and replaced with a locking iron door, possibly for a coal chute.

The splayed windows of the octagonal section are slightly smaller than the others. Although these windows have granite sills, the lintels are a combination of granite and brownstone; the iron bars are anchored into granite lintels, and brownstone is used where the lintel meets the concrete parging. The second bay ground-floor window on the northeast face and the first bay ground-floor window on the northwest face of the octagon have been slightly enlarged.

7. Roof: A hatch in the third floor ceiling of the anteroom provides access to the roof. The roof of the main block and octagon are hipped and covered with modern plywood and asphalt shingles. A shallow pitched roof with a rubber membrane covers the jailer's quarters. The roof of both stair towers, also a shed roof covered with a rubber membrane, slopes back toward the main roof. Single scuppers shed water onto the main roof from the towers. A crenelated parapet runs along the top of the entire building, including the towers.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. Ground (first) floor: The first floor of the jailer's keep consists of two rooms off a central hallway and a small foyer that accesses the main entry of the jail. One step above the floor level of the jailer's keep, the west room contains exposed floor joists with signs of an earlier plaster and lath ceiling. A doorway in the northwest corner of the room leads to the western tower. The north and west windows of the room are sealed, and an air conditioner unit has been added to the west window. An arched brick support for the hearth above is visible along the south wall. The doors on this floor, like the doors in the

octagonal wing, are made of double-thick tongue and groove beaded board and have wood casings. The metal locking set of the west door appears to be original, although the rest of the hardware may be more recent. Across the foyer, the east room has been divided into two modern bathrooms. The door to the stair tower is accessible through the men's bathroom. The windows in the bathrooms have been closed in, but the exterior door is still in place. The door, lock set, and hinges of this exterior door appear to be original.

The ground (first) floor of the central cell block is three steps below that of the jailer's keep. It consists of two rooms on either side of a central hallway that runs from the jailer's quarters through the main block to the octagonal wing. The drain in the middle of this hallway divides the main block into an east and a west side. An arched opening leads to the east half of the ground floor cell block. A brick wall with two grilled vents and a cased opening divides the east block into two areas. This interior wall covers approximately three-quarters of the length of the room. A modern sink and toilet have been added to a corner near the double-paneled wood door in the east wall. A concrete pier has also been added for additional support to the double I-beam girder.

Across the central hallway, a full brick wall divides the west ground-floor cell block into two rooms. This wall turns 45 degrees shortly before it meets the interior wall of the hallway. The four-paneled wood cells in the north room are later additions, presumably for the museum or one of the movie sets. The presence of a dumbwaiter in the south room indicates that the room may have served as a kitchen for the jail. In the southeast corner of the room, a doorway with a metal grate leads to the dumbwaiter. The sill of the door and the entire area are two steps above the ground level of the kitchen. The remnants of the dumbwaiter, which served both upper floors, are still present in the shaft. The fireplace in the southeast corner of the room, however, appears to have replaced an older one. The wood partition wall along the west side of the room also seems to be a new addition. It creates a small storeroom, accessible through the double door on the west elevation of the central cell block.

The ground floor of the octagonal wing is two steps above that of the central cell block. On either side of the hallway, which is painted pale green, there are two rooms with masonry walls. Currently used as a file room by the Housing Authority, the southeast room contains a dehumidifier along the north wall. The Housing Authority also uses

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the southwest room of the octagonal for storage. A partition wall has been added to the northeast corner of this room to create a small modern bathroom.

c. Second floor: The rooms on the upper floors of the jailer's keep served as living quarters for the jailer. These rooms contain many features indicating domestic use, including hardwood floors, baseboards, picture molds, crown molding, and fireplaces. The second floor consists of a center anteroom flanked by two rooms, accessible from below by the stair towers.

A 12" baseboard with a 1-3/4" shoemold runs along the bottom of the plaster and lath walls of these rooms. A double round crown mold runs along the top of the walls, while a picture mold runs approximately 18" below it. The walls of the west room are painted a 'seafoam' green with an 'apple' green band between the picture mold and crown mold. Brown paint covers the baseboard, the door trim, the window trim, and most of the doors, except for the door to the stair tower of the west room, which is painted 'ecru'. Although the wood trim and molding are painted the same brown color of the west room, the walls of the east room are cream. Like the east room, the cream walls of the anteroom cover several layers of earlier paint.

The original plaster and lath ceiling of the east room has been removed and replaced with a white gypsum board ceiling, which has broken away in several places due to water damage. Water has also damaged the white ceiling of the east room and the 3/4" gypsum board ceiling of the anteroom. The plaster of the walls has begun to peel away under the light-well windows of the anteroom.

Although the keystone is missing, the fireplace along the south wall of the east room still has its slate hearth, mantel, and surround. The west room has no fireplace. The south wall of the women's room on the ground floor contains a brick fireplace support, indicating that there was once a fireplace along this wall.

The second floor of the main building consists of a center hall flanked by two large rooms used as cell blocks. The exterior north and south walls of the cell blocks jog out approximately 3' in the far corners. The fireplaces in each corner of the cell blocks contain no mantels, hearths, or surrounds. The flue vents of the fireplaces, located approximately 10' above the floor, have been sealed. Although the

individual cells are no longer present, marks which indicate a cell layout are visible on the floors of the cell blocks.

The cells on the second floor of the octagon have plaster over brick walls and wood floors covered with concrete coating. The ceilings consist of 2 x 8's covered with tongue and groove. Moisture has caused the ceiling in the northeast cell to cave in. Modern fixtures such as fluorescent lights and a display case have been added to the room, presumably when the building was a museum. An additional modern wall at the north end of the cell obscures the location of the dumbwaiter shaft. The opening to the dumbwaiter, although sealed, is still visible along the hallway of the octagon. In the southeast and southwest cells, three wood partitions have been added to each room, probably when the jail was a museum. Vents lie in the southeast and southwest corners of these rooms along the interior hallway walls.

d. Third Floor: Like the floor below, the third floor of the jailer's quarters consists of a center anteroom flanked by two rooms. These rooms may have served as bedrooms and a bathroom for the various jailers. The east and west rooms still contain the remains of fireplaces. Although the slate hearths are intact, the fireplace openings have been sealed and the slate mantels and surrounds of the fireplaces have been stripped. Consequently, the cast-iron lintel and jack arch of the fireplace opening in the east room are visible.

The brown wood trim of these rooms includes a 12" baseboard and a 1-3/4" shoemold. The faded grey lath and plaster walls of the east and west rooms do not contain a crown mold like the rooms below. Although the east room does not have a picture mold, the west room features one shaped slightly differently from those in the lower rooms. Blue paint covers the area between the brown wood picture mold and the ceiling in this room, which has been damaged by water. Water has also damaged the ceiling and floor of the east room. The floor beams show signs of insect damage.

The anteroom walls have faded to a green color. A green painted wainscoting, approximately 4-1/2" wide, appears in some portions of the room. The room also shows signs of a partition wall dividing it into a hallway and a smaller room, possibly a bathroom. The remnants of the partition wall are evident along the door jambs and the floor.

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Along the south wall of the west room, portions of plaster and lath have peeled away to reveal nailers recessed in the brick walls with 1-1/2" x 3" furring strips attached to them with 1-1/2" horizontal wood lathes. Three anchor bolts along the west wall indicate that a fire escape may have been attached to this outer wall. The fact that the bars have been removed from these two windows, and the breaks in the beltcourse running along the exterior of the building, further support this theory. The steel panels in this room and in the east room on the second floor may have served as part of the fire escape landing.

As on the previous floor, two heavy doors on either side of the main hallway open into the east and west cell blocks. These rooms have the same white walls and grey floors, although the structure of the beaded tongue and groove ceiling is slightly different. The cell blocks, like the ones below, have four corner fireplaces, all sealed, and a rough outline of cells in the middle of the room.

A more modern floor, wall, and ceiling construction, dating to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, appears in the cells of the third floor of the octagon. Most of the walls are of tinplate attached to vertical tongue and groove siding, in turn attached to 3 x 5 nailers recessed into the brick walls. The south wall of the northeast cell and the north wall of the southeast cell do not have protective tin. The ceiling construction consists of wood furring strips attached to the underside of tongue and groove, all of which is covered by wire mesh lath and plaster. A concrete coating covers the wood floors in all the rooms except for the southeast.

e. Attic: An opening in the hall ceiling of the central cell block provides access to the attic of the main block and octagon. Two large metal cisterns centered over the hallway rest on 8 x 8 blocking between two trusses. The metal pipes that fed the rainwater to the rooms are still intact.

2. Hallways: A multi-level central hallway with a concrete floor connects all three sections of the first floor of the jail in the interior. On the ground floor, the walls that define this hallway are brick bearing walls with a plaster finish and whitewash. This passageway leads from the main block through a brick masonry wall and wood door casing to the rear of the octagon. Several modern utility boxes line the walls of the hallway. Towards the end of the hallway, the passage rises a step for a utility area with a drain in the middle of the hall. The passage then leads to the south door at the rear of the

octagon, which opens onto the jail courtyard. There is a service shower for the inmates to the east of the door. Another shower to the west of the door has been made into a room with wood partition walls.

A light well isolates the central cell block and octagonal wing from the front jailer's keep on the second and third floors. A grilled metal wall and door separate the hallway of the main block from the light well on the second floor. Part of the metal frame where the door meets the wall has broken away. Plaster and remnants of painted wainscoting cover the brick walls of the hallway.

The central hallway then runs from the main cell block through a thick doorway with double doors to the second floor of the octagon. A painted wainscoting approximately 5'-4" high covers the walls of the hall. An electrical conduit also runs down the hall, servicing the hanging electrical fixtures. The metal gate near the end of the hall by the exterior doorway was probably added when the jail became a museum. The additional exterior doorway leads from the second floor of the octagon to the rear courtyard of the jail. On either side of this doorway, there are showers similar to the ones below. The west shower has been converted into a ticket booth; the east shower is now a landing for a spiral stair. Like the installation of the metal gate, these alterations were probably made when the jail was a museum.

3. Stairways: Granite steps with metal handrails lead from the ground floor of the jailer's keep to the second floor of the central cell block. Two flights of decorative cast-iron stairs lead from the second floor to the third floor of the center hallway of the main block. The longer flight of stairs ends in an intermediate cast-iron landing between a second flight of stairs leading to the main block and those leading to the octagonal wing. Both the modern spiral stair in the rear of the octagon and the main stair access the third floor of the octagonal wing.

The four-story stair towers on either side of the jailer's quarters contain winding wood staircases with 6" diameter wood center posts. The undersides of the staircases are of whitewashed lath and plaster. The wall thickness of the towers decreases as the staircases rise. A painted wainscoting lines the sides of both stair towers between the second and third floor doorways.

4. Flooring: The flooring in the jailer's keep and octagonal wing is of wood frame construction, with a concrete floor coating installed in the octagonal wing. The floor system in the central section contains brick vaults between steel I-beams. It also rests on double I-beam girders in the cell blocks, with a single intermediate steel post bearing into a steel lintel over the windows.



5. Wall and ceiling finish: Water has damaged some of the lath and plaster walls and ceilings of the jailer's keep. Consequently, the second floor ceiling of the east room has been removed and replaced with a white gypsum board ceiling. In one of the third floor rooms of the jailer's keep, portions of lath and plaster have peeled away to reveal nailers recessed in the brick walls with 1-1/2" x 3" furring strips attached to the nailers with 1-1/2" horizontal wood laths.

The walls of the main cell block consist of masonry covered with concrete parging. The ceilings, however, vary from the shallow brick vaulting of the first and second floors to the beaded tongue and groove ceiling of the third floor. Concrete parging covers the brick walls of the first and second floors of the octagon. Most of the cell walls on the third floor, however, are comprised of tinplate attached to vertical wood tongue and groove siding, in turn attached to 3 x 5 nailers recessed into the brick walls. The ceiling construction consists of wood furring strips attached to the underside of tongue and groove, all of which is covered by wire mesh lath and plaster.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The upper east and west rooms of the jailer's keep each contain a four-paneled wood door leading to the anteroom and a two-paneled wood door leading to the stair tower. In the second floor east room, the top two panels of the anteroom door have been replaced with plexiglass, as has the top panel of the stair-tower door in the west room. The east room contains an additional doorway where the fireplace in the west room is located. This doorway, presumably added when the jail was a museum in the 1970s, has a concrete threshold and leads to the east side of the central cell block. One of the panels of the stair-tower door of the third floor west room is missing. The brown wood trim around the anteroom door of the east room has been stripped.

At the end of the second floor cell block hallway, a thick doorway with a metal casing and raised metal threshold leads to the second floor of the octagonal wing. Slots for locking cross bars line either side of the doorway. Although one of the metal doors is missing, the metal grating is still present.

On either side of the central second and third floor hallway, two large double doors open into the east and west cell blocks. These doorways contain metal casings, thresholds, moldings, and outer and inner doors. The doorway to the second floor west cell block is missing the

outer door. Although four panels cover the outer metal doors on the hallway side, the doors are not paneled on the interior. These outer metal doors have two circular peep holes, while the inner metal grilled doors contain semicircular shelves. Both the locks and doors appear to be original.

Two double doors on either side of the hallway through the octagon lead to the wings' cells. The wood outer doors, representative of the cell doors throughout the octagon, are made of double tongue and groove with beaded edges. The hardware appears to be original, but the majority of the locks have been removed. Both the wooden outer doors and the grilled metal inner doors sit in paneled wood casing. The first floor doors of the jailer's keep, like those in the octagonal wing, are made of double thick tongue and groove beaded board and have wood casings.

b. Windows: The upper east and west rooms of the jailer's keep both have three nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows, while the anteroom contains four sash windows. The window sashes of the three windows in the west room are still intact; those in the east room are slightly damaged. The brown wood trim normally around the windows has been stripped from the third floor east room, and the window sashes are missing. Two windows of the anteroom open onto the light court between the central cell block and the jailer's keep. Across from these windows, also without sashes, are two large arched windows which open onto the entry bay.

On the first floor of the octagonal wing, one of the two windows in the northeast room has been sealed for a gas heater vent, the other enlarged. The northwest room also has a sealed window for a similar vent. All of the windows in the southeast room have been sealed on the inside.

7. Architectural furniture: The third floor east room of the jailer's keep still contains a built-in wardrobe with beaded wood siding and large double-round crown molding in its southeast corner. The single panel doors open into two separate compartments. The left compartment includes a series of four shelves; the right may have been used to hang clothes. The wardrobe along the south wall of the west room has been stripped and removed.

8. Mechanical Systems:

a. Heating: There are several sealed vents in the cell blocks, possibly for a forced air system added in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, located along the upper walls of the two rooms. Two vents are present in each of the north and south walls of the east room; the west room has an additional vent along its east wall. Steel plates have been added to the first southeast window of the third floor cell block. One of the plates has a circular opening for some kind of pipe, possibly part of a heating system.

The cells on the third floor of the octagon display the variety of heating systems used in the jail. The northeast room contains a flue for a forced air heating system on the west wall near the doorway. Two cast-iron grills, one on the flue, are present on the west wall. The sealed opening on the east wall of the northwest room appears to have supplied heat by a forced air system. The east wall of this room contains a heating system grill. Below it, the remnants of an electrical heat radiator are visible. There are also signs of older and more modern electrical fixtures along the ceiling of this room. The east wall of the southeast cell contains a heating system grill, with the remains of an electrical radiator below.

b. Plumbing: The concrete patched holes in the southwest corner of the west cell block (2nd floor) may have been for plumbing.

c. Gas: Gas outlets for the old fixtures of a gas system are present in the four-story stair towers on either side of the jailer's quarters. There are remnants of gas heaters in the northeast and northwest rooms on either side of the hallway.

d. Electric: The remains of an old electrical system, including porcelain knobs (rings) and push-button plates, are still visible along the walls of the four-story stair towers. Two old outlets for electrical fixtures and the remnants of an old intercom or buzzer system are present on the east and west walls of the jailer's quarters on the third floor.

D. Site:

In addition to the jail, the lot includes a wall, several gates, and an outbuilding. The property is defined by a wall varying in height from 15' on the front of the site facing Magazine Street to 6' on the sides and back. The wall is brick covered with concrete parging, which has been scored to resemble stone and whitewashed. The wrought-iron gates on either side of the

main entrance on Magazine Street appear to be later additions. Pillars define a third gate facing Franklin Street. These pillars, approximately 10' high, also appear to have been added. An additional opening at the rear of the site opens onto the Housing Authority quadrangle. This aperture, approximately 75' in length, is defined by two 30" square pillars. The east wall along the side of the site contains another opening, added to allow cars to enter and park in the rear jail yard. Brick pavers cover an area between the rear of the jail and the brick wall of the site. A concrete walk runs around the periphery of the jail, with connecting sidewalks to the Housing Authority quadrangle south of the jail lot. On the northwest corner of the lot is a small concrete-parged brick outbuilding (6' x 12') that apparently served as a generator shed. A portable cast-iron convict cage (7' x 15') sits near the southeast corner of the building. Several large trees, including five oaks and one magnolia, are also present on the site.

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